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THE INNER LIFE



THE INNER LIFE

ESSAYS IN LIBERAL EVANGELICALISM.

SECOND SERIES

BY
MEMBERS OF
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



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INTRODUCTION

THE title of this book implies a history. Volume I of *Liberal Evangelicalism* appeared in February 1923, and has already nearly exhausted its fourth edition. It represented an intellectual and spiritual movement of the Evangelical School of thought within the Church of England. A group of men, brought up in the Evangelical tradition and rejoicing in its interpretation of the Gospel, endeavoured to formulate the evangelical message anew for the age in which they lived. It was necessary for them to speak courageously as well as reverently, and to explore such questions as the Person of Christ, the Authority of Scripture and of the Church, the Meaning of the Kingdom and the Rule of Life. It was inevitable that they should come into collision with some Anglo-Catholics whose view of the nature of God is different from their own, and with some of their Evangelical brethren who still believe in the inerrancy of every part of the Scriptures. The ground had to be cleared if Evangelicalism was to become once more a great spiritual movement untrammelled by fetters never laid on it by Christ. The movement which created the earlier book is steadily growing. More than 600 clergy belong to the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement. Their aim is to apply Gospel principles to personal religion, social questions and the problems of institutional Church life, and their policy endorses such efforts at Restatement as have been made. Fifty-three pamphlets dealing with the Christian faith in relation to Theology, Sociology and

Science have been published for the Movement by Hodder & Stoughton under the Editorship of Canon Vernon Storr and the Rev. G. H. Harris.¹

This second volume directs itself more particularly to the Inner Life. It seeks to show how God works through the evolutionary process which the history of the world reveals, how He enters into and co-operates with the spirit of Man, and brings him into fellowship with Himself. The origin and meaning of sin is discussed and an answer given to the question so often asked: "What do you really mean by the Grace of God?" We have been at some pains to deal with conversion in relation to modern psychology and to explain what the doctrine of the Indwelling Christ means in our own spiritual experience. We have traced the outward expression of this inner life in witness and service, and in the domain of Christian values. Finally, we have dealt with the aids afforded to the Inner Life by Prayer, Bible reading, corporate life within the Church and the Sacrament of the Holy Communion.

We have endeavoured throughout to be constructive, and it is a regret to find how impossible it is to be constructive without at the same time being controversial. But it seemed necessary to deal with the excesses of the Augustinian theory of the transmission of sin, with mechanical views of the transmission of Grace, and in particular with the meaning and purpose of the Holy Communion.

In the former volume space did not permit a full treatment of our sacramental position, and this has been remedied in the last essay of the present volume. We are anxious to remove the curious impression which exists that Evangelical teaching is "indefinite" in contrast with Anglo-Catholic teaching which is "definite." Like

¹ Cross-references to these are made in some of the essays.

all *clichés*, the statement really begs the question. Much "definite" teaching which is given in certain circles we reject as contrary to the Mind of Christ. In the eyes of such people we must always be regarded as "indefinite" or else as minimisers of the Sacrament. On the other hand, in our own judgment we hold a very definite view which we believe to be commensurate with our Lord's mind concerning the Sacrament.¹ We are not concerned with what He did not mean by it, and we quite frankly confess that we believe that much has been added to it which is foreign to His intention and to the spirit of His teaching. In this sense we may be said to hold a "reduced" view of the Sacrament. We have set forth this Evangelical "reduced" view of the Holy Communion, and venture to claim for it an amplitude neither greater nor less than the New Testament warrants.

But we shall have failed in our purpose if our concern for interpreting God's wonderful gift of spiritual life in Christ is obscured by any critical element in the book. It is impossible not to seek to provide such a metaphysical and psychological basis as enquiring minds demand. We have endeavoured to supply this in the first two essays and in the twelfth, but we have approached the subject in other essays with much the same purpose in view as the promoters of "the Keswick Convention for the deepening of spiritual life." There is an inner spiritual life which creates the power and sets the standard for conduct. We have sought to expound its origin and growth and application in Christ. It is much to be regretted that the promoters of "Keswick" still lay

¹ "The pagan sacramentalism of the ancient world was definite in statement and extravagant in claim. To its adherents St. Paul's mysticism was doubtless 'indefinite.' The view which we hold we believe to have been also that of the Apostle. It seems to us to be congruous with our Lord's mind concerning the Sacrament."—E. W. BARNES.

stress upon one particular theory of Biblical inspiration and omit large fields where application of their teaching might be tested. The subject of the spiritual life and how it may be intensified is so vital to the welfare of the world that we desire those who handle it to be unhampered and unhindered in their work. The Church stands in need of a Convention freed from such narrowing restrictions. No greater service could be rendered to the Church than to think out anew what is called "the Keswick message" in the light of scientific facts and in terms of modern psychology, and to present it to the multitudes that need it.

The view of the Christian life at which we have arrived may be called synthetic, or—to use a more familiar word—inclusive. The question whether Christianity is ascetic in the strict sense of the word is answered in the negative. In the essays on "The Christian View of Life" and "Separation from the World" the comprehensive attitude is set forth. It is no part of the creed of a Liberal Evangelical to ignore literature and science or social relationships, but it remains true that his relation to these is very different from that of the pagan even at his best. For us the moral struggle dominates the field, and the Call of Christ to take up the Cross and follow Him demands from each of us an effective, if a varying, answer. Our view of human nature and our attitude to humanity are defined by the Incarnation, whose "self-giving" finds its supreme manifestation in the Cross. There is no call for rival schools of humanists and puritans to group themselves respectively round the Incarnation and the Cross. They are inseparable in our thought and undivided as a basis for a philosophy of life.

It will be noticed that there is no essay on the Holy Spirit. It is hoped that it will be equally noticed that every essay presupposes His work. Whether in the

evolutionary process of creation, or in the mind of primitive man, or in civilised humanity, or in the new-born soul, or in the corporate life of the Church, we assume Him as initiating and sustaining man's fellowship with God. If the volume had been intended to be a purely academic treatise such omission would have left a serious gap, but as the intention was the much simpler one of dealing with the plain fact that we have "a life in Christ to live" and of helping people to live it, we have not thought well to overload the book with theological essays.

This particular point raises the question what audience we have in mind. Not simply the clergy, though it is fatally easy for most of us, who are clergy, to fall insensibly into the way of writing with no one else in view. Not certainly the man in the street. He does not understand what Liberal Evangelicalism means, even though he may be vitally concerned in the long run with the view of God, of religion, of social fellowship, and of Church life which the book sets forth. We have written both for students and for ordinary thoughtful people who are looking for a coherent view of the Christian religion, and long for a satisfying sense of the presence and power of God in their daily lives. A certain general intellectual background is assumed, but a wide variety of readers has been in our minds. We have not thought it necessary that each essay should make the same kind of appeal. Some are more strictly philosophical, some might be described as popular, and one certainly is not without a mystical vein.

The book, however, is offered as a whole and not a miscellany. The scheme has been worked out in consultation, and the various essays have been submitted, as in the first volume, to the common mind. While liberty to treat his subject in his own particular way has been left to each writer, there is at the same time

collective responsibility for what might be described as the general "findings."¹

Two points about the writers may be of interest. First, we have sought the co-operation of some younger contributors, not merely to add freshness to the presentation of the common message, but to keep in touch with the younger generation. It is well known in Student Movement circles how quickly the point of vital interest in religion changes with succeeding generations of students, and how easy it is in writing a book to remain in a back-water while the main stream of thought passes by. We have sought to guard in this way against providing what we might fondly think ought to be wanted, but what as a matter of fact is not *really* wanted.

Secondly, some of the writers have not been "reared" in the same Evangelical surroundings as the rest. They have found their way to a position which enables them to support what the original writers had in mind and to contribute to this presentation of what spiritual life in Jesus means to the individual and the Church. There is room in such a movement as ours not only for those who, like some of us, owe practically everything in our spiritual experience to early Evangelical training, but for those who have had no such spiritual origin, but have come to see Jesus and the Gospel of Jesus "in this way." We have found that there are many who, like ourselves, are in love with the freedom, directness, simplicity and joyousness of the New Testament, and who are thinking out their faith and their churchmanship anew with steadfast reference to the Mind of Christ. We are grateful both for their co-operation and help in setting free the spirit of Catholic Evangelicalism in the Church.

The wonder and beauty of our subject have exercised

¹ This statement does not apply to Dr. Raven, who has not seen any essay except his own.

a great fascination over us. Most of the writers have met for conference either in London or at Hereford, where, for two delightful summer days, we were entertained by the Bishop. The rest of the consultations and revising work has been done by correspondence. But we have been struck both in our conferences and in our correspondence by the way in which all the essays have become quite spontaneously Christo-centric. We have been like men each with his pencil trying to describe a circle round one Centre. This is no doubt a natural result where men, deliberately setting aside all denominational questions of minor importance, seek to make clear a spiritual life which owes everything to one much-loved Figure.

Still the fact remains that we have all found our work engrossing and enthralling, and some of us would dare to say that we have seen our Lord anew. We can only hope that we may pass on something of the inspiration we have received to those who read this volume.

T. GUY ROGERS.

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I

GOD AND MAN

AGNOSTICS are far more numerous than atheists. He is a bold man who would dogmatically deny the existence of God. The denial savours of pride and self-conceit. No atheist appears in the pages of the Bible; no Hebrew ever doubted God's existence. The psalmist speaks of a fool who "said in his heart, There is no God," but this is not speculative atheism, but the practical atheism which in the conduct of life takes no account of God's demands upon men. The agnostic, on the other hand, may point to the humility of his attitude. What can we finite creatures know about the Infinite God? We can neither affirm nor deny His existence; "clouds and darkness are round about him." The very constitution of our minds cuts us off from any knowledge of what lies behind the visible scene. Strict agnosticism, then, leaves the existence of God an open question; but probably most agnostics would admit that there was some unknown power behind the universe, only they would deny that we can further characterise that power. This was Herbert Spencer's position, and it is open to the charge of want of logic. For if human faculties are so limited that we can have no knowledge of ultimate reality, how can we even affirm that God exists? And if we can rightly affirm the existence of God, why may we not go on to affirm more about Him? It would not be difficult to show that both atheism and agnosticism are philosophically indefensible, but for our present purpose it is enough to

point to the fact that mankind has always been incurably religious. In all ages and among all races men have been searching for God and have believed that they have found Him. The very variety of men's views about the nature of the Supreme Being is witness to their deep-rooted conviction that God exists. Human nature must remain unsatisfied in its deepest aspirations after truth and goodness unless some knowledge of the source of truth and goodness is attainable.

What, now, do we mean by the term God? A study of the history of religion shows how, with the advance of knowledge, the idea of God changes; and to-day the change is very marked. We are discarding some of the older theological conceptions, and emphasising attributes of His nature which in earlier days were not so emphasised. All new knowledge throws light upon God and His purposes, and it is therefore important to keep our thought of God fluid, and to recognise that the conception of God is one which admits of development. But any development which may take place will assuredly only enhance our sense of the divine Majesty. The disclosures of astronomy as to the vastness of the physical universe merely serve to emphasise the psalmist's words—"the heavens declare the glory of God"; while the conception of evolution increases our wonder at the grandeur of the divine purpose. Rightly, as we shall see, do we insist upon the idea of God's immanence, but the thought of His transcendence remains, and will remain. "The Lord sitteth above the water-flood: and the Lord remaineth a King for ever." This essay singles out certain features in the idea of God which, in the opinion of the writer, should be given prominence at the present time.¹

¹ In this essay the problem of the Personality of God is not discussed. It is assumed that He can be spoken of in personal

(1) Let us begin with the idea of Creation. We cannot dispense with the thought of a creative will upon whose volition the universe depends both for its origin and continuance. A process of evolution must proceed from some source, and that source must be in itself adequate to produce what emerges in the course of the development. The standing difficulty for the materialist is to give any satisfactory explanation of the appearance of mind in an evolution whose sole basis is matter. Can mind have any other ultimate source except mind? Similarly, can moral goodness emerge in the course of evolution, if it were not in some way present at the beginning? Human reason naturally seeks to find some explanation of the universe. It is not satisfied with the discovery of how things have come to be what they are; it wants to know why they are there at all. We see in operation a vast process of evolution, and in the case of this planet an evolution which has resulted in the production of spiritual beings possessed of moral reason and a measure of creative power. We judge that a spiritual purpose is at work, that the meaning of the evolution is to be found in the end reached by the evolution. Hence, when we ask for an explanation of the whole process we can only conclude that behind the process lies the volitional activity of a Creator who is a purposeful Being. In the nature of God is to be found the source of the development.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” The Bible opens by emphasising the creative activity of God. But “in the beginning” raises problems directly we begin to think about the meaning of the words. When we speak of creation in relation to the

terms. *Is God a Person?*, by Dr. W. R. Matthews (Anglican Evangelical Group Movement Pamphlets, Hodder & Stoughton), should be read.

universe, the thought which most rapidly comes to our minds is the thought of making something out of nothing. As a protest against dualism, against the idea that matter in its own right is as eternal as God, this thought is very valuable. It emphasises the primacy of God and the entire dependence of matter upon His volition. But it is surely not the most important thought in connection with the idea of Creation, nor can we give any clear meaning to it. For our own creative activity, so far at any rate as matter is concerned, is never a making out of nothing. It is the shaping of a material which already exists and which we find to hand. Traditional theology has held that God began at some definite point of time to create a universe, having existed prior to that in the glory of His self-sufficiency. But what moved Him to begin then to create? It is difficult to answer the question. The answer which, perhaps, most would give is that in His unfettered liberty He freely chose to create. Such an answer, however, suggests a thought of the divine volition which is surely to be avoided. Will as a kind of arbitrary activity, as sheer spontaneity operating with unlimited freedom, is not the true thought of will. Volition springs from character, and is the expression of the nature of the being who wills. God's will is the expression of God's nature. The significance, then, of the idea of Creation does not lie primarily in the thought of making something out of nothing, but rather in the thought of the self-expression or self-revelation of God. But, if this is so, are we not driven to think of Creation as an eternal activity? If it is God's nature to reveal Himself, must He not always have been doing so? Must He not always have expressed Himself in a universe? There is no proof that the universe began to be. The particular phase of evolution in which we are living doubtless had a beginning and

will have an end; but it seems more reasonable to suppose that there has been an unending succession of universes called into existence by the creative activity of God as the field on which His purposes might be executed. Such a view of creation certainly implies that matter (whatever matter may ultimately be) is as eternal as God; but it is not eternal in its own right, for it is the instrument which God creates, and through which He expresses Himself. The primacy belongs, not to matter, but to the creative activity of the divine nature.

Pantheism fails to satisfy us as a philosophy, because it does not distinguish between God and the universe. "God is all, and all is God" is the pantheistic creed. But God is not to be identified with the universe. Matter is His instrument, and behind the instrument stands the Maker of it. For the pantheist evil is as much an expression of the divine as good. But we destroy the meaning of moral distinctions if we regard everything which exists as divine. Pantheism gives no clear answer to the question whether the creative source of the universe is an intelligent will. Its metaphysic is misty in the extreme. It satisfies neither the demands of our reason, nor of our conscience. On the other hand, it is not without value, reminding us that God is not to be thought of as a Creator standing apart from His works, at a distance from them, but should rather be conceived as the indwelling Spirit of Life in whom we and all things "live and move and have our being." The engineer constructs his machine and then stands outside it to regulate its working. An organism differs from a machine because the regulative principle of its life is within itself. It is truer to think of the universe as an organism sustained by the immanent creative activity of God, than as a machine controlled by some external force. The

nearness of God to His creation and His activity within it are the truths which underlie the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible speaks of the Living God. Now the Living God is the Creative God. Creation is continuous. Each springtide reveals in bud and flower the unceasing creative activity of God; each admonition of conscience or visitation of some high thought of holiness witnesses to the working of the divine Spirit in our hearts. But God's self-expression in Creation varies in intensity and significance. There is an ascending scale in His revelation of Himself; there are degrees in His creative manifestation. We learn more about God from a flower than we do from a stone; still more from sentient and conscious life; most of all from human personality with its ideals and moral struggles. God is Spirit, and it is spirit in ourselves which is the best index to the nature of God. We have therefore to think of God as progressively revealing Himself, and of a great spiritual purpose being slowly worked out through the ages.

A problem here arises which is worth brief consideration. The antithesis between the natural and the supernatural has broken down. Our thought of an immanent Creative Power teaches us that this antithesis cannot be maintained in its old, hard form. The laws of Nature are God at work; natural forces are truly supernatural since they depend upon the continuous creative activity of God. But what of miracle? Is the universe a closed system into which no new energy can come from without, or can God on special occasions act in special ways? We need to revise our thought of miracle. To speak of a miracle as an irruption from without into an ordered system of working suggests that God stands apart from the universe, and occasionally interferes with its processes, just as a watchmaker may alter the balance of a

clock's pendulum if the clock does not keep time. Do we not reach a more satisfactory thought of miracle if we consider our own creative activity? In our degree we are creators. We have a measure of freedom; we express ourselves and our purposes in our actions. And our self-expression is not uniform. We put more of ourselves into some acts than into others. It is the prerogative of spirit to be creative with varying degrees of intensity. Can we reasonably think that the Creator of the universe is tied by the system which He is perpetually creating? Cannot He act with greater intensity at one moment than at another? Has He no reserves of power which may be manifested on special occasions? ¹ Creation, so we judge from the course of the evolution which has taken place on this planet, means the bringing into being of new things. The new thing appears without causing any dislocation in the working of the whole system. And unless we are able to affirm that all the forces which operate in the universe form a closed system, or that God's creative energy is exhausted by what He has made, we are in no position to deny the possibility of miracle. But let us think of miracle, less as a "bolt from the blue" hurled into a self-acting system of mechanism, than as the spontaneous self-expression of a creative Will; the personal activity of a Living God, who, just because He is intensely alive, finds occasions for special creative activity.

¹ Some will doubtless regard the fact that we as human spirits are creative with varying degrees of intensity as a limitation due to our finiteness, and will hesitate to apply such a conception to God. But whatever difficulties there may be from the side of philosophy in such a thought of God, religion surely requires that God shall be credited with the power of free self-expression. Christianity must regard the Incarnation, for example, as an act of God charged with special significance. It could not place it on the same level as the creation of a flower or a comet, or hold that it had no more meaning for God Himself than these lesser operations of His volition.

In thinking of God's creative activity we do well to remind ourselves how, in living Nature at any rate, individuality is stamped upon the whole range of His creation. Science for its own purposes, fixing upon certain broad similarities in natural objects, places them in classes, and to each class attaches the label of a general name. But in actual fact no two living things are exactly alike, no two blades of grass, no two leaves on the same twig. If the dissimilarities are not visible to the naked eye the microscope will quickly reveal them. The higher we mount the scale, the more marked does the individuality appear. It culminates in man. Each human being, viewed as Christianity views him, is a unique child of God, with his own special character to form and his own special place to fill in the divine plan for humanity. It is as if the Living God had determined to leave some distinctive impress of Himself upon each of His works, creating as an artist with care that each creation of His hands shall have worth of its own. "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him" (Genesis i. 27). There is spiritual kinship between man and God. To the charge that man makes God after his own likeness and projects upon the clouds his own semblance, calling it Deity, comes the answer, "It is true; and the procedure is justified, because God first made man like Himself and endowed him with a portion of His own nature." No temptation to despise human nature can ever conquer us, if we remember our "high calling" and "the rock whence we are hewn." In the thought of our individuality and our value in God's eyes is stimulus for sustained endeavour to be worthy of our vocation.

"Then took I up the fragment of a shell,
And saw its accurate loveliness,
And searched its filmy lines, its pearly cell,
And all that keen contention to express

A finite thought. And then I recognised
God's working in the shell from root to rim,
And said: 'He works till He has realised—
O Heaven! if I could only work like Him!' " ¹

(2) We pass on to consider how best we may characterise God, and what are the qualities of His nature which we should emphasise. We can form our conception of God only from a study of His works. Man is not born with any innate idea of God. When primitive man first framed the conception of God we have no means of knowing, but it was probably at a very early stage in the story of humanity, for human reason, confronted with the mystery of Nature, could hardly fail to reach the thought of some power or powers behind Nature, upon which both man and Nature depended. Even earlier than the conscious activity of reason there may have been an awareness of God, a vague sense of the presence of some Being with whom man was in contact. But however the idea of God arose, the story of the evolution of religion is the story of the gradual enrichment and purification of the idea. In the evolution of religion, as in the evolution of organisms, there are retrogressions; ground gained in one age is lost in another. But we can trace a clear line of advance, which is most marked in the Bible.

Whatever modifications in our idea of God may be necessitated by the growth of modern knowledge, the core of that idea must be the teaching of the Hebrew prophets and of Jesus Christ about God. In the prophets there is set forth a lofty ethical monotheism. God is shown as personal, as the sole ruler of history, as possessed of moral character, and requiring morality in His worshippers. No other contemporary nation reached any such conception of Deity. Upon this basis laid by

¹ *Scarlett Rocks*, by T. E. Brown.

earlier theology Jesus built His conception of God. He revealed God under the name of "Father." Love, He said, was the heart of the divine character, a holy Love to which sin was abhorrent. This Love was universal in its range. God loved all men, and longed that all men should come to the true knowledge of Himself. Jesus presented God as the great Spirit of Holy Love, whose purpose in creating was to call into being a society of human spirits, who should live in fellowship with Himself and with each other, animated by the principles of love and moral goodness. The nearness of God to men, the intimacy of the fellowship between the Father and His children, are cardinal ideas in the mind of Jesus. St. Paul and the other writers of the New Testament, starting from the teaching of Jesus, develop it mainly by emphasising the thought of the Holy Spirit. They teach a doctrine of God as a Being who, coming very close to man, seeks to dwell in him, giving him power and illumination. This thought of God as indwelling in humanity is the outcome not only of the view of Jesus Himself, but of their interpretation of Jesus. The Christian religion affirms that God, who had been progressively revealing Himself, crowned His earlier revelations by coming Himself as a man to earth in the Person of Jesus. The perfect Personality of Jesus was thus the truest expression of the nature of God. But the fact of the Resurrection made the primitive Christian Church realise that Jesus could not be adequately described in terms of manhood alone. His humanity was real, but it was the channel through which His deity was expressing itself. The Resurrection marked the entrance of His divine-human personality upon a career of universal spiritual sovereignty, to which witness was borne by Pentecost and the new energy of life which came to the Church. The Jesus of history was revealed as the Living Christ

of spiritual experience. Through the Spirit Jesus was proving Himself to be alive, and to be guiding and teaching humanity.

If we grant the truth of the Christian position it is clear that our thought of God must be derived from the Person, work, and teaching of Jesus. God is what Jesus is. The qualities in God which He emphasised we must emphasise. The Old Testament is the record of a divine revelation, but there are elements in the Old Testament which are not revealed. They belong to an earlier stage of belief about God, and we have outgrown them. Two examples will suffice. If God is the loving Father of all men He cannot have ordered that innocent Canaanite babes should be slaughtered (1 Sam. xv. 3). That command which the narrative puts into the mouth of God reflects the imperfect conception of God obtaining at the time. Nor can Jehu's slaughter of the house of Ahab be justified by the plea that it was a divine command (2 Kings ix. 6, 7 and x. 1-11). The prophet Hosea condemns it (i. 4). Elisha's statement and Jehu's action belong to days when the thought of God was not truly ethical. Only by slow stages was a more worthy idea of God reached in Old Testament times, and what the prophets taught about Him was supplemented by the clearer and fuller revelation given by Jesus.

Now as we take a general survey of the process of evolution on this earth, we are compelled to interpret it in terms of purpose. It moves from the lower to the higher, from the inorganic, through life, to the production of moral personality. The spiritual is increasingly forcing its way to self-expression. God seems to be saying, "I am Spirit, I am the Perfection of Beauty, Truth and Goodness. Wouldest thou know Me? Look within the human heart and thou shalt find Me." Nature witnesses to God, to His power and wisdom; the beauty

of Nature tells us that God is not indifferent to beauty. But it is in man at his best, man as a spiritual being, striving after character and the fellowship of love, that God is most clearly seen. We cannot say that God is the process of evolution, but we must say that He is in the process, in the sense that He is expressing Himself through it and is its creative and sustaining cause. And as the process develops, the revelation of the divine nature becomes clearer. It was the great achievement of the Hebrew prophets that they moralised the conception of God, and laid stress upon His ethical qualities. Those same qualities we emphasise to-day, but we gather them up under the thought of a divine Love which suffers with humanity, which is wounded by human sin, and yearns over the race of man; a Love which exercises a perpetual pressure upon men, seeking to persuade them to holiness and to fellowship with God and with each other. Christianity draws no picture of a good-natured Deity who thinks lightly of sin and easily forgives it. It places sin against the background of suffering love, and bids men consider sin in that setting, if they would understand its true nature. Amos insisted upon the moral sternness of God; Hosea described His tenderness and yearning passion that Israel might become forgivable, so that He could forgive them. Was sin any less heinous to the latter prophet?

God must have many purposes at work which we cannot fathom. But unless we are content to regard the story of this earth as an irrational and meaningless sequence of changes—and this is to commit intellectual suicide—we must admit that some plan is being carried out. That plan we can characterise only as a spiritual plan. It has to do with the formation of character, with the perfecting of personality, with the production of a society of free human spirits who, living in love together,

shall reproduce in their own lives the moral qualities which make up the divine nature. If God is like Jesus, then the life of Jesus provides the pattern for our living. And He described humanity as a family or brotherhood, and God as the loving Father who was seeking to educate His children in ways of holiness and love.

(3) The divine plan is being carried out only at great cost. God's purpose meets with resistance in its execution. The evolutionary process is a scene of struggle and pain and suffering. How are we to account for this? In face of the many imperfections of the human organism, and of the widespread presence of pain in the animal and human worlds, can we maintain our belief in the omnipotent love of God? It is a very old problem of which probably no complete explanation will ever be found. But taught by science and by reflection upon the nature of God, we have learned better how to state the problem; and to state a problem clearly is the first step towards its solution.

We may begin with the fact of human sin. Sin accounts for much of the suffering of humanity. Why does sin exist? Because man misuses the freedom which God has given him. But, it is retorted, God must have known, when He made man, that man would misuse his power of choice, must have foreseen that all this suffering would result. Can we believe that He is Love? Can Love want to see humanity suffer? No; we may certainly affirm that God does not want humanity to suffer, though the responsibility for the possibility of all this suffering rests with Him. But before we bring any indictment against God we must see that we are taking into account all the circumstances. The issue turns upon what we consider to be God's purpose in creating. If His purpose was to establish a kingdom of moral personalities He could achieve that purpose only by

giving men freedom; for freedom is the very breath of morality. A compulsory goodness is no goodness at all. The thief is not made an honest man by having his hands tied behind his back. In order, then, that the divine purpose might be accomplished God had to accept the possibility, or even probability, that man would sin. And for human misdeeds, which spring from man's free choice, no blame can be attached to God.

But was it worth while for God to create such a universe? The answer to the question depends on the quality of our power of moral appreciation. Which is the more worthy kind of universe, one in which all the inhabitants have a life of contented happiness and ease, unvisited by any dreams of spiritual heights which they may aspire to reach; or one in which there are free, creative spirits haunted by the presence of ideals which challenge and inspire? After all, there are some things in life which we judge to have value in themselves, and to be intrinsically worth while, and one of these is moral goodness. Truth, Beauty, Goodness are ultimate ends, and no argument is possible with a man who denies this. God, then, accepted the fact that man would misuse his freedom, because the end sought was abundantly worth while. We may go further and say that no other end or means were possible, given the nature of God. We must start from somewhere, and here we start from the character of God. If He is what we believe Him to be, then by the inner necessities of His Being He must express Himself in a universe, and must call into existence a commonwealth of moral personalities made in His own image. The Will of God is not a will which can do anything, or abstain from doing anything. His will is His nature operating or expressing itself according to its constitution.

But the tragedy of human life consists not simply in

the misuse by man of his freedom, but in the fact that so often the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, and that the innocent suffer for the misdeeds of the guilty. Certainly a shadow seems to fall upon the divine Love when we think of this, and of the apparently haphazard incidence of suffering. Why should the diphtheria germ strike one and not another, or the earthquake wipe out one village and spare the next? Why should God allow a child to grow up a physical wreck because its parents sinned? No answer that satisfies the intellect can be given, and it were perhaps wiser to attempt no answer. Jesus, as reported in the Fourth Gospel, did not really answer the question put to Him about the man born blind. He said he was born blind "that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (ix. 3), which ultimately leaves the problem where it was. Some alleviation of our perplexity is afforded by the thought that in this life we see only a small fragment of God's plan. If we grant the existence of a life beyond the grave, we may reasonably hope that we shall there have clearer vision, and that much which now puzzles us will be made plain. But in the last resort we cannot solve the problem.

Many feel that animal suffering constitutes a graver difficulty than human suffering. Pain in a human being is capable of serving a disciplinary purpose, and it is a fact that some of the finest flowers of character have been grown on a soil of suffering. But the animal, though it is spared the pain of anticipation, lacks the moral vision which can turn loss into gain and reap "the far-off interest of tears." Even though we admit that the pain of the sub-human creation is less acute than the pain of man, the fact that animals do suffer is plain, and we want to know why they do so. It is not enough to point out that pain is the spur to progress, and

gives warning what to avoid. That may be true enough, but it does not meet the dimensions of the problem.

Can nothing more, then, be said? No help is given by postulating the existence of a demonic power of evil in conflict with God's purpose of love. The problem is but put one stage further back. Whence came that power of evil? Theories of fallen angels or of some pre-temporal fall of humanity have no evidence to support them. Nor can the traditional doctrine of the Fall of man be made to square with the facts of scientific knowledge.¹ And in any case the sin of man cannot possibly account for animal suffering millions of years before man was in existence. The solution of the problem can lie only in the nature of God and His purposes.

We see a spiritual purpose working itself out at a great cost. It meets with resistance all along the line. Every deformed animal is witness to the presence of some power that thwarts the execution of the divine plan. The plant which grows up stunted or sickly has failed to reach the standard which we judge it was intended to reach. What is this power of resistance? The answer, I believe, lies in the thought of the self-limitation of God. We need two conceptions of God, as transcendent and complete in Himself; as immanent and entering into the time-process. If creation, as has been argued in this essay, is an eternal activity, God is always both transcendent and immanent. To create at all implies self-limitation. God subjects His activity to the laws of the universe which He creates, and limits Himself by giving freedom to man.² We must believe that He created the

¹ See Essay II.

² The animals, too, possess freedom in their degree. Wherever there is life there is some spontaneity. The process of evolution is a process of winning freedom in increasing measure; cp. McDowall's *Evolution and the Need of Atonement* and *Evolution and Spiritual Life*.

best possible universe which the execution of His general plan allowed. If His ultimate object was to train a race of beings endowed with moral reason, the physical universe, which was to be their home, must be built on a fixed plan, and its forces must operate uniformly, otherwise man could never be trained. In a world of surprises, when anything might happen at any moment, no race of rational creatures with moral characters could be produced. Man can learn "to look before and after" only if he is reasonably sure that Nature will not play him false. Now in such a universe, though when viewed as a whole we may rightly call it good, the individual is bound at times to suffer. What we call "accidents" must inevitably happen, and there must occur failures in the execution of parts of Nature's plan. The complexity of Nature's forces is immense; they cross each other and interact in innumerable ways. In a system of that kind both animals and men cannot but experience pain and loss at times. But if God has entered the time-process surely He must be suffering with His creation. Does not Love spell self-sacrifice? Can Love stand apart and watch a world in agony? Must it not seek to share the agony? It is an intolerable thought of God which places Him entirely outside the life of His creatures. What the Cross of Christ reveals about the nature of God, that He came to earth to share the burdens of humanity, is true of God's relation to the whole process of evolution. He enters into it, experiences the struggle, feels the pain of the whole of His creation. He does so because it is love's nature to go out of itself in self-sacrifice. Our own sufferings may not be fully explained by this thought of God, but a new light is thrown upon them when they are thus linked to God's sufferings.

What now do we mean when we speak of God as Omnipotent? We do not mean that He can do anything.

There are many things which God cannot do. He cannot be untrue to His own nature. He cannot compel a free human spirit to be good. By His omnipotence we mean that He will not suffer His purpose finally to be defeated. If He is a God who strives and struggles in the time-process, He is also a God who in principle is already victorious. Being in control of the universe He will guide it to its appointed end. Love must win in the long run. For the Christian the pledge of that ultimate victory lies in the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus. There we see Love weak and suffering, but passing through the weakness to its glorious triumph. Faith accepts that pledge and feeds itself upon the great conviction that, in spite of all hindrances and oppositions, a spiritual purpose of love is moving to its consummation.

But because it is a spiritual purpose concerned with the development of human personality its accomplishment depends upon the co-operation of human wills. God uses men as His instruments. He has committed the execution of His purpose to us, but has left us free to help Him or resist Him. The Divine Spirit, operative everywhere, makes His presence felt chiefly in human hearts. "In him we live and move and have our being," and none can say where man ends and God begins. We have to work out our own salvation, but all the while it is He who is working in us. And the pathos and tragedy of the situation lie just here, that, though we cannot permanently defeat, we can delay the purposes of God, and by our sinning and selfishness can wound the loving heart of God. We can, and do, increase enormously the cost to God of carrying out His plan. All the while His Love waits patiently, bearing what we put upon it, seeking to win us back to better ways. God is the Suffering Servant despised and rejected of men. He is always giving His back to the smiters. We

are always crucifying Him on some Calvary of our own making.¹

Born a helpless babe at Bethlehem, the divine Love came to earth in the Person of Jesus Christ. It passed through a genuine experience of suffering and human limitations, but all the while it was growing to a destiny, till at last it overcame its self-chosen limitations and emerged sovereign and triumphant. So on the larger scale of the universe we think of God limiting Himself and entering into the time-process, but moving all the while through pain and struggle to the fulfilment of the plan which is the expression of His Love. Are we to stand aside and do nothing, and let that Love suffer? That is cowardice and selfishness. God calls us to share His life, to co-operate in His task. If we refuse, two things happen. We ruin our own personalities, so sacred because they are the habitations of the Infinite Spirit; and we cause pain to a Love so tender that it feels all the sorrows of the world. "Take up thy cross." That is the challenge which comes to us all.

V. F. STORR.

¹ For the meaning of Omnipotent Love see Archbishop D'Arcy's striking essay, "Love and Omnipotence," in *God and the Struggle for Existence* (Student Christian Movement).

II

THE RISE AND GROWTH OF MAN'S SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

RELIGION is a natural product of human nature. It would not exist but for the experiences, needs and aspirations which are characteristic of humanity. It is, in fact, an inevitable result of the structure, powers and working of the human mind. The mind of man is the given thing with which we start. There are differences between individual minds, but, at any rate among the more advanced races of mankind, these differences are relatively small. We all perceive objects in the same sort of way and use the evidence of our senses to make roughly the same picture of the external world. Our minds work similarly; if they did not we should think that others were either childish or mad. What seems reasonable to me seems in general reasonable to my neighbour: we have a common standard of rationality. Our instincts are fundamentally the same: we desire or dislike the same things. Like circumstances, moreover, produce like emotions. Broadly speaking we set our wills in the same direction. Of course, complete uniformity in any of these respects does not exist. Each individual varies from the mean; and even small variations may be so important, or so troublesome, that we fix attention upon them. But the journalist, whose success depends upon his skill in appealing to the "average man," knows full well that our minds are built on the same plan. In thought, will and feeling,

the three divisions of mental activity, we are fundamentally the same.

Between advanced and primitive races there are considerable mental differences, especially in regard to feeling and power of abstract thought. But it may be said with some confidence that such differences are more due to the general tradition of culture into which children are born than to natural capacity. All living races belong to the same species: they are different varieties of *homo sapiens*. Their brains show the same type of development. The differences between any two normal human brains are quite small compared with the differences which separate either from the most advanced of the anthropoid apes. Likenesses there undoubtedly are between our minds and the mental processes of higher mammalia; but our knowledge of the brain and of the significance of its different regions warrants the conclusion that the animals do not think, act or feel as we do. The human mind is unique upon the earth. Because it is what it is, religion has come into existence. Man is the religious animal.

How did religion begin? The Christian would say that God implanted in primitive man the germ of spiritual understanding. The man of science, on the other hand, describes an apparently "natural" development. We will first indicate the sort of description which science gives. Later we will advance reasons for holding that the Christian and scientific standpoints form a fundamental unity. Apparently, in the Reindeer Age of France, Palæolithic man, hunter and fire-maker, buried his dead in expectation of a future life. His "sculptures testify to funeral rites and to a true worship of the dead." This would indicate that, at least some 50,000 years ago, men existed who had made vague speculations as to the ultimate meaning of human life. We may perhaps say

that the feeling that the Universe is not hostile to the individual and his tribal group—a feeling with which such speculations would be immediately associated—is the basis of religion. Primitive man, when he began to think, found himself in a social group surrounded by danger, hardship and death. Yet his surroundings made life possible. He was one with, and to an unequalled degree master of, Nature. The world, as he saw it, was not such a bad place. There was a Friendliness around, if his community could only enlist its aid. But how could this object be achieved? Certain acts became associated with the idea of success. Some we should consider rational, as they strengthened tribal organisation. Others were irrational, created by fancy out of pure chance. Some resulted from the personification of dreaded forces, which it was desired to placate. Thus taboo and sacrifice arose. Gifts to the god are natural: equally natural are social restraints, marriage prohibitions, cleanliness rules and their fanciful developments and distortions which are thought to please him.¹

Alike to savage and to civilised man, the most inexplicable of natural processes are those connected with

¹ The above brief statement is necessarily inadequate. Widely differing views as to the nature and origin of primitive religion are held by experts. Probably religious cults arose from social acts rather than from individual speculations. Such acts influenced religious theory and were only partially determined by it. A short statement of current opinion, with numerous references, will be found at the beginning of Chapter XII of J. B. Pratt's *Religious Consciousness* (Macmillan, 1921). Professor Pratt defines religion as "the serious and social attitude of individuals or communities toward the power or powers which they conceive as having ultimate control over their interests and destinies." Professor A. S. Peake, in *Christianity, Its Nature and Truth* (Duckworth, 1908), suggests that religion is essentially "fellowship with the Unseen." Otto, in *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford University Press, 1923), thinks that religion arises from awareness of a terrible and awful unknown.

reproduction. The fertility of cattle and of other animals used as food, the plenteousness of harvests, continue to be of outstanding importance to human welfare. Among savage or half-civilised peoples, where medicine is undeveloped and both accidents and warfare are common, human fecundity is highly prized. Hence we naturally find that religion in such peoples is associated with Nature's generative forces. Goddesses of fertility characterise a certain stage of religious development; and often their worship has been associated with most gross and repulsive practices.

All the religions which we can now observe, or of which we have written records, appear to have been shaped since men learned to sow corn and to domesticate animals. They are, as the anthropologists would say, the religions of Neolithic or of modern man.¹ Now man only reached the Neolithic stage of development in Western Europe some 10,000 years ago; and, although the same stage may have been reached earlier elsewhere, notably in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Russian Turkestan, it seems certain that the antiquity of the forms of human religion with which we are acquainted is extremely brief compared with that of man. Man, the reader may be reminded, emerged from a generalised ape-like stock about a million years ago.² In view of the wide differences

¹ Possibly an exception should be made of the Australian aborigines. Many hold that, when first discovered, they were still in the late Palæolithic stage of development. They had, however, domesticated the dog.

² An admirable discussion of the antiquity of man, and of the evidence on which modern views are based, will be found in *Fossil Men*, by Marcellin Boule, English translation by J. E. and J. Ritchie (Oliver and Boyd, 1923). The general reader will appreciate the numerous illustrations by which the volume is enriched. A necessarily tentative reconstruction of the pre-history of Europe is contained in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. I (Cambridge University Press, 1923). The introductory chapter by Professor Myres gives a graphic account of the way

which separate the highest from the lowest of existing religions, we may conclude that the religious development of humanity during recent millennia has been rapid. The fact of man's spiritual progress is sometimes denied by those who proclaim that "human nature does not change." Their pessimism is rooted in ignorance.

Such rapid change is, in a sense, artificial. Our primary instincts, inherited from our animal ancestry, remain strong. The impulses which make for self-preservation and race-preservation, together with such mental traits as the herd-instinct and the fear of darkness, have come down through millions of years.¹ Man's distinctive evolution seems to have been predominantly due to his acquisition of the power of speech. This led to the development of the higher brain-centres.² Man needed to convey to

in which geological and climatic changes affected the fortunes of the human beings who lived in or near Europe long before the dawn of Egyptian civilisation.

¹ W. H. R. Rivers in his book *Instinct and the Unconscious* (Cambridge University Press, 1920) suggests that in man "the unconscious is a storehouse of experience associated with instinctive reactions." An extreme example of his theory may be given. There is reason to believe that man, like all mammals, passed through an amphibian phase in his evolution. But the amphibian must have a mind adapted to two very different kinds of existence, in water and on land respectively. Rivers suggests that this fact may explain the occasional appearance in humanity of "splitting of consciousness."

² Perhaps it would be better to say that the development of speech and of the higher brain-centres proceeded simultaneously. Physiologists divide different regions of the cortex of the brain into two groups: the "sensory-motor regions" and "association areas." The latter are intellectual centres. "The anterior portions of the frontal lobes of the brain are indispensable to the intellectual life." In the lower mammals they are almost non-existent. They are more important in the apes, and we can trace their marked development through Neanderthal to civilised man. "Neanderthal man had only the most rudimentary articulate language." He flourished in the Mid Pleistocene geological period and apparently belonged to a species of man which is now extinct.

his fellows not merely primitive human emotions and commands, but reasons and ultimately abstract ideas; and the human brain was gradually fashioned in response to this need. Yet it was not until the discovery of writing, apparently some 7000 or 8000 years ago,¹ that man could gather up and store his mental triumphs. Oral tradition does not safely preserve the discoveries or aspirations of the mind. But writing keeps the best intact and furnishes an instrument by which that best may be made the basis of still further advances. We shall later consider the religious interpretation of the "natural" process of human development which science describes. Our primary concern is to indicate concisely the facts of human evolution. When the scheme which men of science put before us has been outlined, we can seek to explain it. We shall then claim that human progress must be the result of a divine purpose, that man's spiritual consciousness is a divine gift. For the present we view the rise of religion as a fact of anthropological investigation. From this standpoint we may say that speech first made religion possible, but that writing has been the main factor in its purification and enrichment.

Our instincts are our own: they are born with us. But it is very doubtful if our thoughts are really our own. Certain mental tendencies appear to be inherited. Hence, if the opportunity is favourable, primitive superstitions will reassert themselves with disquieting vitality. Different races, moreover, have not only different physical characters but different mental constitutions. Hence Christianity among a pure Nordic race like the Scandinavian differs markedly from the form which it takes among the relatively pure Iberians of Southern Italy.

¹ These figures may quite possibly be increased as a result of archæological discoveries, especially such as may be made in Central Asia.

But the actual ideas which we hold, religious and social and intellectual, we get from our fellows. They are not our own: they are given to us by "suggestion"¹ or education. Most men, an anthropologist will say with gloomy truth, do not think for themselves: they react to what they receive from others. Their minds are not creative but receptive. They are sorting machines, as it were, which take or reject what is more or less congenial. Hence habit and custom are immensely powerful for good or ill. When different races with different traditions of life and thought mix, the immediate result is usually harmful. The individual is surrounded by an atmosphere of moral and spiritual conflict; and unless, as we say, he is exceptional in character, he degenerates.

In spite of all these facts the human race has thrown up a sufficient number of men of creative genius to make rapid progress, intellectual and spiritual, since the discovery of writing. Descriptive science does not, and indeed cannot, explain the origin of creative genius. As we shall argue later, the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit is necessary to interpret the whole process of human development. It suffices now to say that men of genius, of creative power, do actually appear. They are relatively few in number. But there are many others who, though their minds are not creative, can appreciate genius and will seize upon and hold to its achievements. Though the large remainder in any nation follow slowly

¹ "Suggestion" is, broadly speaking, the process "whereby one mind acts upon another unwittingly." Sometimes it is used merely to denote "the cognitive aspect of the herd-instinct." Thus W. McDougall, *Social Psychology* (16th edition, Methuen, 1921), defines it as "a process of communication resulting in the acceptance with conviction of the communicated proposition in the absence of logically adequate grounds for its acceptance." An illuminating discussion of suggestion will be found in W. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* (2nd edition, Unwin, 1919).

and reluctantly, they are, under favourable circumstances, dragged upward. Thus human progress, intellectual, moral and spiritual, is a fact. There have been periods of decay, especially when good stocks have been exhausted by war or wealth. But, on the whole, the advance of humanity has been definite and fairly rapid since the discovery of writing laid the foundation of modern civilisation.

In religion especially we can trace such progress. Primitive religions, as we have indicated, were largely irrational and seldom moral. When men personified natural forces and sought to placate the hostility or to win the favour of their resulting deities, moral ideas had no place in religion. When the conception of a tribal god was reached, the welfare of the tribe was thought to be his especial interest. Social acts which weakened tribal cohesion were therefore condemned by religious authority. But in the primitive moral code there were no universal standards of right and wrong: towards hostile tribes the god prescribed ruthless vengeance. In the earliest records of the Old Testament we can perceive this stage of morality. Jehovah was the God of Israel: Baal was a god of their Canaanite enemies. The grossness of the Canaanite nature-cults was an abomination to the more morally-decent Hebrews. Differences of worship inflamed national antipathies. But the Hebrews themselves did not begin to outgrow the thought of Jehovah as a God of vengeance until Amos arose. That great prophet and his successors took Hebrew religion and made it truly moral. "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" was their especially characteristic teaching. Owing to the strength of religious conservatism the Temple sacrifices were retained until the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. But centuries earlier prophetic teaching evolved the synagogue. In our Lord's time

the Temple and its ritual were really an anachronism. When the prophets had advanced to the conception of One God, righteous and demanding righteousness, Lord of the whole earth, they had virtually decreed the suppression of animal sacrifices and central shrines. "Neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and truth" (St. John iv. 21, 23). It was thus given to the Hebrew race to make a religious advance unequalled in any independent development of human history. Polytheism was replaced by Monotheism. Superstition and sacrifice—to say nothing of religious immorality—lost their *raison d'être* as men grew to understand the true nature of God and His demands upon men. The Hebrew prophets prepared the way for Christ. Jesus stands at the apex of Hebrew religious progress as He proclaimed the love of God, laid down the principles by which men might gain communion with the Father, showed in His own death the redemptive power of innocent suffering and gave to humanity the reality no less than the appearance of God Incarnate upon earth.

Many Christians resent the description of the development of human nature which we owe to modern investigation. They say truly that it cannot be harmonised with the Catholic doctrine of the origin of sin, which was fashioned by St. Augustine on the basis of speculations accepted by St. Paul. Nevertheless modern discovery must be accepted. It must be used in religious reconstruction for the simple reason that it gives us facts which, though unexpected by our forefathers, are true. Man had an animal origin. He has evolved from an ape-like stock. He has gradually acquired religious understanding. His spiritual growth is a part of the great evolutionary progress which has led to human

civilisation. Obviously all races have not reached the same stage of progress. There are between races, as between individuals, marked differences. But the main direction of development is clear. In becoming human the non-religious animal acquired or received the religious sense through which he is gaining or has gained more adequate conceptions of God. We cannot say that civilisation has made religion, any more than we can say that religion has made civilisation: each is a result of the actual historical development of the human mind. Man, trying to conquer his environment and to fit it to his needs, has acquired knowledge. He has learned, and is still learning, both how to use the processes of nature and how to act so as to make the best of his social life. As individual understanding has been quickened by the growth of social organisation, man has gradually been led to realise that goodness and truth are of paramount importance in human life. He has won the knowledge that these qualities are spiritual principles to which he must be loyal. Man's control over the forces of Nature and over lower forms of life has steadily increased. As his ascendancy has become more marked, he has found it ever more necessary rightly to adjust his relations to other men. This necessity has driven him to consider the meaning and purpose of human life. He is thus being forced to conclude that Goodness, Beauty and Truth express the inner spiritual meaning of the Universe. They are attributes of God, the Creative Mind by whom the whole Universe has been made. In other words, they are "absolute values." The whole process of human evolution is a divinely-planned design by which man has been led to this kind of spiritual understanding. As man has thus developed, his sense of right and wrong has become more true: his conscience has become more enlightened and more sensitive. Yet instincts and

passions inherited from the distant past continue to set themselves in opposition to his more recently acquired spiritual insight. There is disharmony within him, a state of war in which defeat means sin. The flesh lusteth against the spirit. In the conflict conscience cannot be silenced, for the desire to know and serve God acquires added strength from all reflection upon human experience and conditions. Biologists reveal a sort of blind upward urge as they describe the slow sequence of change which led from primitive organisms to the higher mammals. Man has become conscious of this urge and its direction. Hence he feels that he must not fall below the level which he has reached: he must struggle up to higher levels. For this purpose he was made. God has prescribed the struggle, which is so fundamental that it explains the meaning of human life. Human life must have a meaning in the eternal scheme of things. No adequate explanation of the riddle of human existence can be given unless we accept Christ's teaching that success in moral and spiritual conflict fits man for the realm of eternal values, makes him a member of the Kingdom of God. Moral apathy and spiritual inertia constitute a refusal to take the path which God has ordained. If the Universe is rational the spirit of the individual must be harmed by lack of response to God's will. "The wages of sin is death."

Such is the way in which, in the light of recent knowledge, we think of sin and its consequences. It is well to bring out the differences between this conception and the Augustinian theory embedded in Catholic theology.¹

¹ The background of the Augustinian theory of the origin of sin is discussed in great detail in F. R. Tennant's valuable treatise, *Sources of the Doctrine of the Fall and Original Sin* (Cambridge University Press, 1903). The connection of St. Paul's thought with earlier and contemporary Jewish speculation is traced in this book. It is a striking fact that the use which St. Paul

The latter theory was based on St. Paul's use of the folk-story of Adam and Eve. It assumed that "in the beginning" God directly created a pair of human beings. He gave to them immortality so long as they did not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Adam disobeyed the command not to eat the fruit of this tree and was punished by sentence of death. Through his sin death came into the world: men and animals for the first time became mortal. In order, however, that God's act of creation might not be undone by death, He gave to Adam and Eve the power of procreation. Sex was thus the consequence of sin. The begetting of children involved the sin of concupiscence. Thus children are literally born in sin. From the act which calls them into being they receive a physical taint. Thus Original Sin has been handed on from generation to generation and the whole world is corrupt.

We have stated the Augustinian doctrine of the origin of sin in its bare crudity. Needless to say there is no trace of it in Christ's teaching. St. Paul is not responsible for its more repellent features,¹ though he apparently took from the popular theology of his time the idea of using Adam's "Fall" to explain the origin of sin and

made of "the Fall" is not to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. Dr. Tennant, in his Hulsean Lectures, *The Origin and Propagation of Sin* (2nd edition, Cambridge University Press, 1906), gives a careful analysis and criticism of beliefs now abandoned in consequence of our modern knowledge of man's animal origin. His constructive work in this volume has been deservedly of wide influence. Various refinements of the doctrine of Original Sin were put forward from time to time. The Roman Catholic theory formulated at the Council of Trent was, like other contemporary statements, "pledged to the anthropology and modes of exegesis which modern research has rendered obsolete and it is . . . incapable of adjustment to evolutionary views of the origin of human nature."

¹ All that St. Paul says on the subject will be found in Rom. v. 12-21 and I Cor. xv. 22.

death. Augustine's fully-developed theory is horrible, for it casts a slur on marriage—God's plan of continuing the human race. For this reason the older Evangelical teaching in the English Church normally repudiated its extravagances. The phrase "born in sin" of the Catechism was rightly held to imply merely that a child at its birth acquired the sinful tendencies of human nature. Sex, of course, can be made an instrument of degradation. But it enters into the finest of human emotions; and, rightly used, sex-instincts have a rich and fruitful influence in the development of human personality. *Corruptio optimi pessima*: the worst elements in human nature arise from the corruption of the best. Christians will cease to fear the psychological teaching that religious devotion derives strength from the sublimation¹ of sex-instincts when they have consigned to oblivion Augustine's theory of the propagation of sin. There is a prevalent disposition to ignore or belittle the change in our views which has resulted from rejection of the story of Adam and Eve. So some Christian teachers, who know full well that sin and death did not arise as a result of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, continue to use the term "Fall" symbolically. It is more honest to admit that our ideas have been radically changed by modern science and scholarship. By the change our understanding of man's relation to God's plan has been purified.

Many shrink from bold re-statement because they have been taught that "the Fall" and atonement through Christ are intimately connected. That St. Paul joined them together in his own thought is undoubted. But all that is of value in St. Paul's teaching with regard to redemption from sin is quite independent of any theory

¹ A description of sublimation appears later in the present essay. See pp. 39, 40.

of the way in which sin came into the world. Sin is, as he taught, rebellion against God. It alienates man from his Maker. We feel the need of aid to make us at one with God. We can get that aid from Christ. He is the living Power who can redeem us. This is the primary fact of Christian experience.

To understand this fact we must consider the influence of God in human life. In other words, we must examine the doctrine of the Holy Spirit: and, the examination completed, we must relate that doctrine to the Incarnation.

Man's evolution, as modern science presents it to us, seems at first sight a wholly "natural" process. Given primitive organisms and their surroundings, "natural selection" seems to be, if adequate, a purely mechanical explanation of the origin of species.¹ Modern biologists

¹ It would be out of place to examine the differences of opinion with regard to the machinery of evolution which exist among biological experts. But, because a base type of religious propaganda uses such differences to cast doubt on the fact of evolution, a short statement may be made. It is undeniable that in all animals offspring tend to differ from their parents. Variations thus arise. Moreover, in the struggle for existence those individuals of any species survive which are best fitted to overcome the dangers to which they are exposed. Valuable variations are thus preserved. Nature weeds out the unfit. This is Darwin's "natural selection." It is a process which gradually piles up differences of bodily structure and organisation till different species are evolved. No competent biologist now denies Darwin's conclusion that by some such process all existing species have been derived from primitive forms of life. But we have no knowledge of the reason why variations arise and there is great uncertainty as to how they are preserved. Darwin believed that the differences which exist between members of a litter are inheritable. This seems to be untrue. And many biologists accept Lamarck's view that variations are preserved because the use or disuse of an organ of the body, which strengthens or weakens its efficiency, "ultimately affects the germ-cells and so produces changes which are inherited." For general readers a small hand-book by E. W. MacBride, *Zoology* (Jack, 1922), may be commended. The wider aspects of evolutionary theory are discussed in J. Arthur Thomson's Gifford Lectures, *The System of Animate Nature* (2 vols., Williams & Norgate, 1920).

teach that living things have an innate capacity for variation. Changes in their structure and organisation continually occur. "Fit and unfit arise alike. What is fit to survive does survive and what is unfit perishes."¹ Nature winnows out her failures and protects her successes. So species have been evolved and man has been made. In particular we may conjecture that man's power of speech arose, as the naturalist would say, "fortuitously," and was preserved because it gave him a better chance in life's struggle. But the better the brain the more effective is speech. So brain-development continued naturally because it had survival-value. Thus man was gradually enabled to discover writing and so to integrate his mental progress. In this way we can construct a quasi-mechanical theory of evolution in which civilisation, and the religious understanding which has developed with it and within it, appear to be the automatic result of the fact that primitive organisms with their potentialities came into existence upon the earth. We may perhaps go further and say that if our knowledge were sufficient we should even understand the machinery by which the earliest living matter came into existence. But does such knowledge of machinery really supply a sufficient explanation of man's existence and powers? Surely not. We cannot explain the higher by the lower. Man is more than an orderly arrangement of molecules resulting from blind mechanism. We must postulate that, as far back as thought can go, when the matter of which the earth is built was an infinitesimal part of some gigantic nebula, man with all his potentialities and powers existed in the mind of God. The subsequent creation of the earth was intended to serve a purpose.

¹ So Professor D'Arcy W. Thompson describes Empedocles' "clear prevision of Darwin's philosophy" in *The Legacy of Greece*, 1921, Oxford University Press, p. 157.

That purpose has been disclosed in the subsequent development of the system of animate nature. The development, though apparently fortuitous, has been really directed. For *creative activity has been at work*. Life, mind as we see it in animals, man's spiritual consciousness—these have been produced : we cannot assume that they were implicit in the primordial matter of the solar system. We are forced to the conclusion that the whole evolutionary process, leading to man's civilised progress as its culmination, is the result of God's continuous action. His purpose and creative power have been ever present. The lower creation He seems to have moulded from without. But man, who has gained spiritual understanding, God also moulds from within. He has given to us—for that is what we mean when we say we have gained—capacity to understand His nature, to respond to His guidance. He has made us for communion with His Spirit, and in so far as we make ourselves fit for such communion we gain it. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the doctrine that the Creator is also immanent in His creation. God is not only an external ruler but an indwelling spirit. He gives us Himself so far as we are able and willing to receive Him. Experience tells us that, though we are constrained by heredity and environment, we have a certain measure of freedom. If we misuse it, as in sensuality and selfishness, we lessen our capacity of response to the Spirit of God. Sin is alienation from Him.

What place does Christ occupy in this scheme? We believe that, in Jesus, God was as completely manifested as was possible under human limitations. Our Lord was Very Man, with a truly human mind. But He was also Very God, showing His Deity in His humanly-perfect revelation of spiritual reality and in His complete loyalty to the Father's Will. These conclusions are bound up

with the experience, discovery, conviction—call it what you will—on which the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is based: that the guidance which the Spirit of God gives to men cannot be opposed to, or separated from, the still living influence of Jesus, the Christ. The progressive revelation of spiritual truth which is an essential element of the divinely-guided evolution of humanity is one with the revelation which came in and through Jesus. So far as we take the personal influence of Christ into our lives, we are enabled to ascend in heart, mind and spirit to the Father. Christ draws us to God and, by this very action, gives us strength to overcome evil, redeems us from sin. But the divine Christ and the Divine Spirit are not two Gods, two separate centres of consciousness, though many popular hymns and some modern theologians countenance this heresy. Christ's teaching, Christ's example, Christ's still living power belong to the one spiritual Source from which humane agnostics derive their idealism. From that Source come flashes of insight to the mystic. From that Source comes also the power of "sublimation" which works the miraculous change of personality investigated by psychologists. There is a true and complete unity in the Godhead. The Word made Flesh in Christ Jesus was not a Personality separate from God. He did not give His life to ransom men from the devil, as crude mediæval theology taught; nor was it necessary that He should offer Himself to placate a justly angry Father, as more recent theories suggest.¹ In Jesus we had a revelation

¹ "The theory which converted the death of Christ into a ransom paid to the devil was generally accepted for nearly a thousand years." So says Dr. Hastings Rashdall in his Bampton Lectures, *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, p. 350 (Macmillan, 1919). In this book, which is remarkable alike for its learning and its philosophic insight, the reader will find clear and incisive criticism of those "substitutionary" theories of the atonement which are still sometimes maintained.

of God as complete and full as our nature allows us to receive. It was in no way contrary to, but it far surpassed, the revelation conveyed in the gradual illumination of humanity by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord was most beautiful in character, supreme in spiritual insight, unsurpassed in moral strength. He exemplified the ideal man, as that ideal exists in the thought of God. So for humanity He is both a standard of perfection and an inspiration. If we receive the direction of the Holy Spirit aright, we are led to Christ. But while the Incarnation is the central fact of Christianity, the doctrine of the Cross is its most distinctive contribution to human religion. They who serve God must expect to suffer in His service. The reward of righteousness is not happiness on earth but eternal life, begun here imperfectly in partial fellowship with God and fully developed after death. Human sin is essentially destructive. It brings suffering to men who try to serve God, just as it made God, Incarnate on earth, endure the torture of Crucifixion. Not evil in Jesus, but the common sin of mankind, drove the Saviour to the agony of the Cross. Christ did not suffer because God was angry, but because men were evil. He gave His life to ransom men from self-centred indifference to those sins which do not immediately harm themselves, from complacent self-righteousness, from the spiritual inertia which is the curse of institutional religion. Who, remembering the influence of the Saviour's example, will say that the ransom has not been given "for many"? The Cross has been, and remains, the great incentive to a divine recklessness which in our own time has sent a Schweitzer to the Congo and many a pacifist to prison. The wider significance of the Cross is connected with its witness to the truth that in all the afflictions of His people, God is afflicted (Isaiah lxiii. 9). But we need not here set

out the developed doctrine, as it is naturally discussed in other essays in the present volume.

The teaching of the Cross has spread far outside the confines of the visible Church. One of the most tragic facts of history is that the visible Church has repeatedly been disloyal to the Gospel of Christ and has made martyrs of men who, inspired by the Gospel, gained steadfastness from their knowledge that they were suffering like Jesus. Against falsehood and unrighteousness, ecclesiastical as well as civil, the power of the Cross has prevailed. The martyr's body has been destroyed only to liberate the spirit. As men die in Christ they reign with Him on earth. Their names may be forgotten, but their influence survives. They are ministers of the atonement, for they help other men to win communion with God. Abelard¹ seized upon the vital principle of the atonement when with rich simplicity he said: "I think that the purpose and cause of the Incarnation were that God might illuminate the world by the light of His wisdom and excite it to the love of Himself."

How is forgiveness of sin connected with the great experiences of religious life? How is it related to repentance, conversion and peace? Abelard gave the true answer: God forgives sin by making the sinner better. Repentance involves conversion. It is a change of feeling which alters both thought and will. When there is true repentance for sin the whole mind turns in a new direction. The primary instincts remain: they continue to be temptations to evil. But the controlling forces become purer and stronger. There arises a truer sense of life's values and duties, of what is worth doing and of what we ought to do. The man sees more clearly the hill

¹ For a brief account of the teaching of Abelard and the original Latin of the passage quoted, see Rashdall, *loc. cit.* pp 357-364.

which he must climb in obedience to the law of his being. He gets strength for the effort. The sense of power gives him the feeling of religious "peace." But such peace is not inertia after conflict; it is the satisfaction which victory gives because it promises further victory in an unending struggle. The promise is not illusory, for right conduct makes further right conduct easier. When a man's energy has once been turned into a channel leading to higher ideals, a less severe effort is needed to make it again flow in that channel. The man is "a better man."

The phenomena of conversion acquire a new significance in the light of modern psychological teaching with regard to "sublimation" and "the unconscious mind."¹ The psychologists point out that "childhood is one long conflict between individual instinctive tendencies and the social ideals and traditions of the community into which the child is born." The conflict continues into adult life and is often especially intense when the sex-instincts develop. Now it is possible to banish from

¹ An admirably lucid account of the theories, built by modern psychologists upon the concepts of "repression" and "complexes," will be found in a small book by Bernard Hart, *The Psychology of Insanity* (Cambridge University Press, 1920). Dr. Hart describes a complex as "a system of emotionally toned ideas," "a cause which determines the behaviour of the conscious stream," "not constantly active but becoming so under certain conditions." "A complex may exert a profound effect upon consciousness, although the individual himself may be unaware of its action." Dr. Hart's definition is regarded by some writers as unduly wide. Rivers, in his *Instinct and the Unconscious* previously cited, suggests that a complex should be used for "any body of suppressed tendencies and experience which shows any form of independent activity." Such independent activity is the essential element in the morbid process of dissociation or "splitting" of consciousness. The terms "suppression" and "repression" are variously used by writers on the unconscious. Rivers uses "suppression" to denote the general process by which experience becomes unconscious, and limits "repression" to the witting endeavour of the individual to effect this result.

consciousness painful experiences associated with instinctive tendencies which are out of harmony with the needs of social life. But such repression is a dangerous process. Whenever unpleasant experience passes from consciousness, with or without an effort of will, an unhealthy mental state may be produced. The apparent peace of mind, which results from "forgetting," may be deceptive. Suppressed experience is often active below the threshold of consciousness. It may give rise to mental processes in the unconscious mind and so form morbid "complexes." Ultimately these complexes may show their effects in mental (rational or moral) disease. Thus the harmfulness of barren asceticism is repeatedly disclosed in the horrible visions of hagiography. The alternative to suppression is sublimation. When we educate a child we do not suppress his self-regarding instincts; we turn them into altruistic channels. For instance, a girl may remain in the centre of her own scheme. But if she be led to see herself as a lady bountiful, the energy arising out of conflict between selfishness and nursery discipline will gradually find expression in kindly service. The self-regarding instinct is thus sublimated. Similar transformations take place in adult life. Their effect is so remarkable that it is natural to use St. Paul's phraseology: "Ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. iii. 9, 10). Using the language of psychology, sublimation is the process in which, as Rivers¹ said, "the energy arising out of conflict is diverted from some channel which leads in an asocial or anti-social direction, and turned into one leading to an end connected with the higher ideals of society." The reader will notice how exactly St. Paul expresses, in theological language, the change

¹ Rivers, *loc. cit.* p. 156.

which modern psychological experts observe and describe.

Conversion, when it is apparently instantaneous, is the sudden recognition of the possibility of sublimation. Though the change may be unexpected by the man in whom it takes place, it is probably always the result of a long-continued series of influences. Of some of these we may be conscious, as we argue with ourselves and struggle for self-mastery. Others are embedded in the unconscious strata of the mind. They may be due to early training, to forgotten experiences and aspirations which are at length ready to bear fruit. Just as a super-saturated solution of some salt suddenly crystallises, so the contents of the mind are re-arranged. The energy of conflict passes along a new channel: there is victory and that sense of rightly-directed power which is religious peace.

Many Christians will say that, by such explanation, the greatest event of the religious life of man is reduced to a merely "natural" phenomenon. What part does the Holy Spirit play in the change? Those who ask such a question really contend for a dualism between "natural" and "supernatural" which cannot be maintained. We must insist that "Nature" is the realm in which, and through which, spiritual activity is manifested. It is the mechanism which God has designed and uses for his spiritual ends. God works upon man by creating his environment just as certainly as if He gave him direct commands. What are "the higher ideals of society" to which sublimation directs a man's energy but "the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" which Christ bade us seek? Human evolution is the process by which man has been led to realise his moral duty and spiritual capacity. Its most characteristic feature is God's slow revelation of the Kingdom which we must

try to enter. And sublimation shows that man can attain the end for which he was designed. The atavistic instincts of self and sex appear, to a superficial observer, fundamentally hostile to spiritual perfection. But in sublimation they are transformed into sources of spiritually rich energy. The doctrine of sublimation is, in fact, the scientific formulation of the principle that, if a man will seek to do the will of God, he shall find that God has created within him the natural powers which he needs.

The Christian doctrine of sin and conversion, depending as it does on the facts of common experience, is psychologically sound in essentials. We must prune away mythological teaching as to the origin of sin. Also we must recognise, more clearly than our forefathers, that the conscience of man is a gradual development in humanity. Until Christ came it was relative to the general level of human civilisation; and even His absolute standards are perceived to have an increasingly richer content as man's spiritual understanding develops.

We accept the historic fact of human spiritual development. We allow that man's conscience has been gradually created: it is still in the making. But we strongly repudiate the conclusion, which some would draw, that sin is of little importance because it is mere disloyalty to an artificial code which varies with time and circumstance. As against such teaching we insist that we must account for what we have received. God has fashioned us by making the civilisation, into which we are born, act upon our inherited instincts and powers. He has thus made us what we are: has taught us the moral law. If we are disloyal to the conscience which He has thus created we are disloyal to Him. To fall below the level on which we find ourselves is to be false to the purpose of our creation. That we can see, somewhat

vaguely, how conscience has been built up does not either disprove its existence or free us from its obligations. It is doubtless true that if man had not developed the faculty of speech and acquired the art of writing, his moral sense would be rudimentary and his spiritual insight non-existent. Man, in fact, would not be man but an anthropoid. It is equally true that, if Jesus had never been born, Christianity would not exist. But the Divine ordering of the Universe has been such that we have the guidance both of conscience and of Christ. Through heredity and environment we are what we are; and by what we are God will judge us. The inner light with its witness to Christ must then be obeyed. Failure to obey it is, as Jesus said in His supremely suggestive parable, failure to make use of the talents with which we have been entrusted. Such failure deserves and will receive Divine punishment. Spiritual apostasy is an affront to the Maker of man. It is right that we should recognise that God only demands from each individual a response proportionate to his spiritual endowment. This truth Jesus plainly taught. Our Father in Heaven is a just judge. From "the heir of all the ages," born of a good stock and soundly educated in clean and healthy surroundings, more will be expected than from a man brought up in the vice and misery of a slum. But no such considerations invalidate the old teaching, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 8, 9).

Repentance and forgiveness have a cleansing power. But when St. John speaks of our being cleansed from *all* unrighteousness he is thinking of the final end of the soul's journey to Eternal Life. No conversion makes a man miraculously perfect. Temptations continue to

come; and every man, who is honest in self-examination, knows that he often fails to be true to his highest aspirations. Growth in grace is a slow and painful process. So intimate are the ties that bind us in social life to other men that, almost in spite of ourselves, we share many of the common sins of our civilisation. The greatest saints of Christian history have lamented their "exceeding sinfulness." To many on a lower spiritual level their language seems extravagant. But the higher we rise, the more distant seems the western horizon, where, in the glow of sunset, the Kingdom of Heaven lies. The human race has still far to travel, and God alone knows how its earthly journey will end. But the individual, who marches in the ranks for some three-score years and ten, has his short-lived duty. Sin and struggle and suffering are its burdens; but love and joy and peace are its reward. Life here ends in death; but Life Eternal with Christ shall be given to those who have made themselves fit to receive it through their service to God. Do we thus make ourselves fit by our own strength? No. The true answer to such questioning was given by St. Paul: "Not I, but Christ working in me." Christianity endures because of the power of Christ to raise men to fellowship with Himself.

E. W. BIRMINGHAM.

III

THE DIVINE QUEST

IN this and the following Essay an attempt is made to deal with the two primary terms, Grace and Sin, about which any doctrine of redemption must be constructed. What is the relation of human freedom, seeking to achieve the highest, to the Divine initiative? What is to be our starting-point, either practically or theoretically, in the way that leads to eternal life?

There can be no doubt that the starting-point is God Himself. In Him all religion that is alive and all theology that is true must find its centre and its motive. But if we mean anything at all adequate when we thus speak of God we must go the whole way in our thought. Despite all the difficulties raised by the fact of evil (see Essay I) we may not think of Him as a partial explanation, a personal principle of love moving among blind impersonal forces, a fellow-warrior with us in the conflict, and no more. A limited God is no God, unless indeed the limitation is of His own doing. In some sense, and that the most ultimate, God must be all, or He is nothing. Only so can every need, intellectual, moral, or spiritual, be met by the Divine Sufficiency.

We need not stay over the metaphysical proof of this statement further than to make one remark upon it. It follows at once from the necessary principle of the unity of all thought. No part of God's Universe can lie outside that unity, and thus no region of being can be

beyond the realm of God. But it is a striking fact that it is our small human mind which demands this totality. What then is man, and how great his destiny, that despite all the limitations upon his life, his little range and his scanty knowledge, nothing less than a God who is All in All can supply his need?

It is in God and not in man that religion must find its centre. Obvious as the assertion is it has nevertheless needed affirming again and again, and this affirmation may be taken as one of the truest notes of Evangelicalism. The danger, which finds its most characteristic expression in Pelagianism, of putting man, with his human effort, in the central place is one which constantly recurs. But man's struggle towards the light, however patient, however heroic, however pitiful, is not the central fact of the Universe. Not man's quest for God, but God's quest for men is the key and the explanation of human life. The shepherd going out into the wilderness for the sheep that is lost, the father hastening to meet the prodigal, the royal host sending out to the hedges and by-ways to compel men to come in, these are the essential images of the Christian Gospel. "God so loved the world that He sent his only-begotten Son." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

It is of the very first importance for religion that we should get this emphasis right. Throughout the history of man's experiments in religion the constant source of failure has been man's obsession with himself, his own needs, his own gods fashioned for their satisfaction, his own cults and rituals. Wherever we turn in the study of early religious systems the story is the same. Despite their complexity, a complexity often not devoid of beauty, and despite their quite evident sincerity, they move in circles of which man is the centre. Their methods

are of human devising, their goal is of human desiring, their Gods are of human fashioning :

“ In the very beginnings of science the parsons, who managed things then,
Being handy with hammer and chisel made gods in the likeness of men.”

There is a certain truth in anthropomorphism, a truth which no believer in the Incarnation dare deny. But it is a truth which must not be held as limiting God. Rather it expresses Him, for God can reveal Himself through man. Man is capable of setting forth that truth of God which is greater than its human vehicle. But the gods that are the mere shadows of man, cast in vastness and vagueness upon the clouds, like the Spectre of the Brocken, are gods of no reality, no worth, and no power. In all religion that is true, the reality, the worth, and the power come upon man from without.

It may be that there is no religion in which God has left himself wholly without witness, no religion which is compact solely of human imaginings, human cravings, and human sin. And certainly the great religions apart from Christianity, which have dominated man over great areas and for long periods of time, have all in one way or another had this objective character. They have, each in its own way, been in touch with a reality that is more than man.

Supreme among such religions stands Judaism with its intense ethical monotheism. Here the objective reality of God is the very key to the whole. As sole Creator and Sustainer of the world, as supreme Lawgiver, vindicating an absolute moral law, as the loving and long-suffering Father of the chosen people, He dominates the development of Hebrew religion. And it is just because of this Divine dominance that we find the level of that religion constantly rising throughout the Old Testament

until the climax is reached in which it is at once transformed and fulfilled by Christ. This development goes far beyond anything that can be explained on the lines of mere human progress. It is something quite unlike the advancing complications of civilisation. For civilisation may be, and often has been, complex and splendid without being upon any high level of moral or spiritual attainment, as Egypt, Mexico, or Peru may testify. But in the Old Testament it is just the moral and spiritual level that rises. Religion does not become more complex until the creative period of prophecy passes with Jeremiah and the second Isaiah. Indeed in its essentials it becomes simpler. In the greatest prophets it seems to have broken away almost completely from the human framework of law, sacrifice, and ritual, within which it had been developed. "I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (Hos. vi. 6). "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah vi. 8). "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after these days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (Jer. xxxi. 33-34). This is the true note. The Supreme Reality which is God is dominating man, and so man finds himself, not as he would be, but as he is, wrought in the Divine image, however woefully that image may have been defaced.

This same sense of God's transcendence and unity is the source of the vitality of Mohammedanism, which,

indeed, rests largely upon Judaism, though it has failed to rise to the level of the great Hebrew prophets and Mohammed himself resembles Samuel, or even Saul, more than he resembles Jeremiah. And when we pass further afield we may still see the same principle at work. The great Oriental religions which go back ultimately to the Vedas, Buddhism and Hinduism in its higher forms, rest upon a conception of God which, however negative, is capable of dominating human transience and desire. Zoroastrianism has a real basis in its vision of the age-long conflict of good and evil, a conflict which no religious system may ignore. And it is doubtless true that the teaching of Zoroaster materially affected Judaism in its later days and that the New Testament has endorsed much that he taught, fulfilling it even as it fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. He too helped to prepare the way. And so again when we look at the vitality of Confucianism, which can hardly be called a religion in any proper sense of the word, we may see its secret in its appeal to an ethical system, a code of morality, which, so far as it goes, is something vital and true, though less than the whole truth. And even when we turn to the primitive or debased forms of animism, totemism, fetich-worship, and magic, it is not difficult to see the secret of their enormous power. Even at their worst they rest upon human impulses and appetites which are not merely individual. Their appeal is racial, and real. At their best they often embody cravings and ideals which look, however blindly, out towards a wider hope. And the reality of God, even though hidden, is stronger than man.

Thus we may look back over the whole course of human history and see everywhere this Divine Quest. The obstacle has been human sin. And that sin does not consist simply in individual acts of disobedience, as we have been far too apt to think. It is rather a radically

mistaken attitude, a turning of life in upon itself, a wilful self-darkening of the human soul. Here and there the reality of God's sunshine, the light that shone into the darkness and was not conquered, that "cometh into the world and shineth upon every man," had broken through in part. But in the main the world that saw Rome's greatness was a world sinful, disillusioned, and cynical, even to despair. The hour of great religions was over. There was neither prophet nor vision. Man gave play to his passions, or sought to control them, and doubted whether either were worth the while. The greatest philosophies of Rome's splendour saw no way better than sober self-indulgence or dignified endurance. The Divine Quest seemed to have ceased. The darkness that man had chosen lay like a very bondage about his whole being.

To such a world came one Paul, a Jew, and certain others following hard upon him, shouting of the Grace of God,

"And as I gathered from a bystander,
Their doctrine could be held by no sane man."

Of course no sane man could hold it. "Sanity" is essentially concerned with the commonplace, the usual. It must ever question visions, challenge discoveries, try the Spirit. It walks upon the level and has no longing to soar. And it measures all things by human standards. At the highest it is the sanity of the philosopher, and no more. But what when the quest of the philosopher for a God that will be measured by his human reason is replaced by the quest of God for the philosopher?

Obviously St. Paul's "foolishness" demands an explanation and the explanation is ready to hand. Jesus of Nazareth had revolutionised the whole of his life, and the lives of others with him. They were sincere men,

but their search for God had failed. They had not found God, whether in the learning of Gamaliel or in the strong passion of John the Baptist. But in Jesus of Nazareth God had found them. To the eleven the certainty had come gradually, with its climax in the upper room when they knew that their Friend was indeed risen from the dead. To St. Paul it had come at a stroke, in a blinding flash that seared and kindled his vision on the Damascus road. And the conviction so burnt into their lives was the turning-point in the story of human religion. Man had come not only to the knowledge of God, but to the knowledge that God was and is seeking, and that He will seek until He find.

The key-word of this conviction is Grace, a word which took a new and a living meaning upon the lips of St. Paul and has been written broad across the pages of Christian theology. It is a significant fact that one of the largest sections in the systematic formulation of Doctrine is entitled the Doctrine of Grace.

The word translated "grace" in the Pauline epistles has a long history, both in its own Greek dress and in the Jewish equivalent which was familiar to St. Paul's mind. In Greek it had three main uses. In early times, and commonly in Homer, it was used to describe an outward "grace" or beauty, an attribute especially of persons. More usually it had a subjective sense, a feeling of goodwill towards some person, and in particular a sense of a favour received. Thus it may frequently be translated by "thanks" or "gratitude." And quite often it was used of the favour itself, a specific act of kindness, something done to oblige another, a boon conferred or repaid. Not at all commonly the word is used to describe a feeling of good will towards a person upon whom a favour is to be conferred, and it is this comparatively rare usage that paves the way for St. Paul.

The Hebrew equivalent of Grace has rather a different history. The word is not so common as its Greek companion. It usually occurs in special phrases such as "to find favour in the sight of —," and here it clearly describes a relationship of good will existing between two persons, either between man and man, or between man and God. This relationship is regarded from the point of view of the inferior, who, as a result, receives some boon from the superior whose favour he seeks. Thus the general colour of the word is more directly personal than that of the Greek term. The meaning "gratitude" does not seem to occur in Hebrew, but in some late passages, especially in Proverbs, the word "grace" is used to describe outward "grace" or beauty, just as in the early Greek use. But this meaning, which is primary in Greek, is obviously secondary in Hebrew. The primary meaning in Hebrew is that of a personal relationship.

St. Paul had gone through an overmastering experience of the divine pardon and the divine favour. He who had been "a persecutor, blasphemer, and injurious" found himself not merely forgiven but transformed. He was free, in the liberty of the glory of the Sons of God, but this freedom was a more tremendous thing than any bondage. A power was upon his whole life. The vessel chosen to bear the Name of Christ "before Gentiles and Kings and the children of Israel," was filled to overflowing by a power that was more than human. The Spirit that was in Christ Jesus had come upon him, and from henceforth his life was hid with Christ in God.

The whole experience was the work of God. He knew that, knew it with a certainty which nothing could shake. He felt that he had done nothing to deserve it. It had come upon him from without, a living, conquering fact.

Nor was it merely an event, something that had happened. It was a new relationship to God. He now knew God as he had never dreamed of knowing Him, and all his life henceforward must needs be a proclamation of that knowledge. And when he sought a word to proclaim this new relationship of God to men, this power that had wrought so magnificently upon him, it was to a Greek word with a Hebrew meaning that he turned, and from Antioch to Corinth, back to Jerusalem, and away to Rome, he proclaimed the grace of God.

Never before had the word "grace" been used in so rich a sense. All the heritage of the past is in it, but there is much more than that heritage could possibly give. For St. Paul the grace of God is not simply the favour or good will of a deity partly known, a deity like some benevolent Oriental despot, powerful, splendid in his gifts, but even at his best aloof and arbitrary. We have not to search diligently that we may find grace in God's sight, for the grace of God is upon and about us always. It is something more than an occasional gift. Rather it might be described as a continual and unstinted giving. And that which is given is God Himself. It is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit which brought to the first disciples the promised gift of power.

And so grace is a personal thing. Both Hebrew and Greek usage had prepared the way for such a conception. But this experience was on a new scale. God was indeed coming directly and personally into human life. That was what St. Paul knew to be the meaning for himself and for the world of Jesus of Nazareth. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" are not three experiences but one. It is a loving personal relationship which is at once the undoing and the making of our lives. It breaks down self-will, destroys the power of sin, and creates the

new life in us. And because it is one with love it is always by the ways of love that grace works in us. It makes no use of the rough methods of force, which can move mountains but cannot win a single human soul, which can only deal with men as though they were things, which is blind and dangerous in its blindness, save only when love directs its hand. Grace is wholly personal and it comes upon us from without. It comes not of our seeking or of our deserving. "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift." The experience of St. Paul has been a recurrent experience all through the Christian centuries, and the word "grace" is inseparably linked with those periods of revival and power when, either upon individuals or upon whole groups and churches, there have come special outpourings of the Holy Spirit, Pentecost renewed. We find it in Augustine with his strong, dominant character, and his long struggle with himself, ended, as St. Paul's struggle had been ended, by what he could only believe to be the direct hand of God. Nobody who reads the story of Augustine's life can doubt the strength and vitality of his character. No weakling could have overshadowed the Church of his day so completely. And yet for Augustine the human will was a thing utterly broken and helpless, bound by the chain of sin that had been upon the whole human race since the fall of our first parents. It was only by the direct action of God's grace that he had found his freedom in surrender, that his gigantic human powers were released for service. So again we find it in Bernard and Francis, Luther and Wesley. With the widest differences in the details of their theology there is common to all these, and to a great and diverse host with them, a certain characteristic attitude, the "evangelical estimate of self," as Ritschl has called it. "He who hears and believes the Gospel, whatever he does to gain Him, praises not his own works

or himself as working; he attributes nothing to himself, knowing that he has nothing from himself.”¹

“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,
But unto thy name give the praise,
For thy loving mercy and for thy truth’s sake.”

The words of this psalm have been the familiar cry of the saint of every age. Men look up to the saints and see in them the grace of sanctity, but the saint looks up to God and knows that the grace and the glory are His alone.

In the light of all this it is easy to understand the protests which have been made from time to time, and never more loudly than at the Reformation, against all doctrines of human merit. The issue which the Reformers contested was primarily a practical one. The way of salvation had become involved in unsavoury trafficking, and once more there was need that the Temple should be cleansed. But the Reformation stood for far more than a protest against indulgences. There was need, urgent need, for a renewed proclamation of the Gospel of the grace of God. And it was here that the Reformers did their greatest work. Their theology was not in all respects superior to that which it displaced. It suffered from lack of balance and proportion. Its conception of faith as assurance “whereby we steadfastly believe the promises of God” is weaker than that of Aquinas, who saw the essential relationship between faith and love. And the penal and substitutionary theory of the Atonement, which the Reformers developed almost unconsciously out of the satisfaction theory, has proved incapable of holding their successors. Yet both their conception of faith and their theory of the Atonement bear testimony to an estimate of religious values which is essentially

¹ Wessell, *De Magnitudine Passionis*, c. 46.

true. God is put absolutely and without rival in the central place. All theology looks to Him, and all the work of salvation proceeds from Him. Faith can be assurance because it rests secure upon His word. Even love is secondary to that. And the Atonement could be viewed as a penalty inflicted by God upon His Son, Himself Very God, in our stead, without an intolerable outrage to the moral sense of that day, just because the action is wholly of God, wrought by Him and within the inner mystery of His Triune Being. It is the climax and the revelation of the Divine Quest, of the God who "willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live," who "so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This value of the Reformation theology is one which we cannot afford to lose to-day. In many respects the forms of theology may and must change with the advance of knowledge. We may not now rest content, either with the magnificent attempt of the mediæval schoolmen to build up the "Science of Sciences" into a completed structure under the guidance of human reason, a structure as intricate and as splendid as one of their own Gothic cathedrals, or with the strong simplicity of the Reformers, a simplicity as sincere and often as crude as the barn-like, white-washed architecture which seems determined that nothing shall intervene between man and the God whom he worships. The penal theory of the Atonement may pass, but not the central truth from which its vitality was derived, the truth that all salvation is of God. And that same theory is also a testimony to the conviction, a conviction held most surely by those who are most sure of the grace of God, that it is not without cost that God goes out to save.

For the sin of man has imposed terrible conditions upon the saving grace of God. We cannot know the full meaning of the fact of sin, but that it is a fact the whole condition of human life bears witness, as it has borne witness in every age. The measure of the meaning of sin is the Cross of Christ. It is not merely that again and again man has crucified man, terrible though that fact is. But in the Cross we learn that man can crucify God, and that, save for a word of forgiveness, God is silent.

And so God's great adventure of Creation, with all the joy of the world's making, has become a costly and redeeming quest. An old legend tells us that briars and thistles sprang up along the path by which our first parents passed forth from the Garden of Eden, and it is God Himself who treads that path to bring us back again. That same eternal Love which wrought in Creation, that the Creator might rejoice in the love of the personal beings whom He had made, and to whom He had given freedom that they might be friends indeed, could not be stayed by the sin of man. If man would not walk with God in the Garden of Eden, when the evening shadows were cool, there was another Garden where God might yet come, a Garden with deeper shadows, whose name is Gethsemane. There God and man met again, and there man did the utmost that sin could do. Treachery, passion, cruelty, jealousy, met about the path of God. And God's grace made a way. Man had been utterly lost, but now God had come to him once more. The barriers made by man himself were overcome, and yet not by force, for an enforced friendship is no friendship at all. The Cross and the Resurrection are the proof that God's quest is triumphant. His purpose has not failed. Once more the way is open. Man's "tremendous Lover" has broken through into our lives again.

Once for all upon the Cross it was done, and yet the

quest of God for man goes on. From the beginning it has been the whole truth and meaning of human life, even in the darkest hour. And still it is renewed in every individual human soul. It was no mere general Atonement that Christ wrought, but a creative work of God that is new in every man that comes to Him. For no one of us comes to God of himself. We live our human lives, and avoid the path that leads to Calvary, if we can. But now the challenge of the Cross is cast over the world and those to whom that challenge comes know that God is seeking them, seeking them individually and one by one, the Friend who longs and has always longed for our little human friendship, the Friend whom we deny, betray, and crucify, and who seeks us still. We may refuse to hear if we will, for God will not compel our love. He seeks the free devotion of free men, and nothing less. Still He seeks and still He waits, though we tarry long in coming. The delay is caused by our stubbornness and we cannot fully know the cost to Him.

And so the Grace of God is about us like an atmosphere in which "we live and move and have our being." That Grace is the meaning of all true spiritual life. It is as personal as, and far more personal than, human love. It is God seeking us for Himself, and it will not stay until the quest is ended, and He is All in All.

L. W. GRENSTED.

IV

SIN AND SALVATION

THAT God is always and despite ourselves our Father, that we are compassed about with His ever-unchanging Love, is the plain teaching of Jesus. In the light of it we can dismiss as not less false to Christianity than irreconcilable with a consistent philosophy of life the concepts of deity as capricious, changeable, now indulgent, now vindictive, which have come down to us from a crude acceptance of the less developed parts of the Old Testament. That the relationship between God and men is obviously not always of the same kind, that He is present to the saint and remote from the sinner, is due to our own various responses to His love, and is the measure of our freedom. For God Himself will not, indeed, just because He is Love, cannot, force us to accept Him: He will have us to be not slaves but friends, voluntary fellow-workers, not puppets. If, therefore, we are to understand the quality of our calling and the process of its realisation, we must turn our thought from the divine to ourselves and to the obstacles that keep us from Him and destroy the "gracious personal relationship," which is eternal life: we must consider the fact of sin and the nature of that amazing revolution for which conversion with its double aspect of repentance and faith is the only appropriate English title.

We are not concerned in the present essay to set out either an elaborate treatment of the quality and causes of sin or an abstract doctrine of Atonement. Taking

the facts of disharmony and rebellion in ourselves and the world, we have to enquire what are the resources by which Christ has enabled His followers to overcome them and how best these resources can be applied. We are concerned, that is, with the fundamental task of the Church. "He shall save His people from their sins"—that was the vocation of Jesus; and the carrying on of His redemptive work is the sole purpose for which the fellowship of His disciples exists. To this all other aspects of Christian life, theology and ceremonial, order and sacrament, social reform and individual consecration, are subservient; they derive value solely from the degree to which they promote the one central aim. It is the supreme miracle of Christianity that it has throughout the centuries revealed the power to transform, to take fishermen like St. Peter and scholars like St. Paul, to take men and women of all sorts and fill them with a glory of power and of freedom, so that the maimed and thwarted life breaks out into the splendour which God meant it to reach, discovering and revealing its true self in Him. The ultimate apologetic for the Church consists of these changed lives; and when a school or party or sect loses the power to save, when its gospel becomes mainly a matter of æsthetic luxuries, or intellectual subtleties, or cant phrases, when its ministry puts scholarship or organisation, social service or religious exercises before the cure of souls, then its days are numbered. If we would be honest with ourselves as Christians, we must constantly be testing our lives by nothing less than this question—"Am I a missionary of God? Whatever my gifts, are they being used to serve the single aim, the extension of Christ's work?"

Such a statement ought not to convey the idea that revivalism is the only fit pursuit for a disciple. God is larger than our formulæ, and there is no cut-and-dried

method of saving souls—partly because mankind is not machine-made and cannot be treated to a *table d'hôte* spiritual diet, partly because revivalist methods, as too generally practised, are based upon bad theology and often upon bad religion. Those who study the Gospels or St. Paul's letters will get a larger conception of their task, and of the ways in which men and women can realise and respond to their Father. Whatever sets men free from vice and ugliness and lies, whatever helps them to live at their best, fostering the glimmer of goodness and beauty and reason that is in them, is a worthy object for our lives; but while we can only be thankful that God speaks at sundry times and in divers manners, and while we dare not criticise or condemn, it is in Christ and the Christian's way of salvation that we seem to find the sole universal remedy for the world's disease.

The characteristic features of this way of salvation are two: a full recognition of the reality and sinfulness of sin, and the discovery in Christ of a power adequate to set us free.

Despite the moderns, sound preaching begins with the fact of evil: it is a call to repentance; and unless men realise from it the need for a change of heart and mind, it will fall on deaf ears. Nevertheless the word sin is unpopular and its treatment is often felt to be difficult; and our hesitation in discussing it is probably one reason for the softness and superficiality of much recent Christianity. Even the favourite device of identifying sin with sex, though fearsomely effective with adolescents, has less power in these franker days. "The modern man isn't thinking about his sins" is true, and the loss is serious.

For sin remains the most terrible fact in the world; and to take a light or careless view of it is only possible to the thoughtless or the self-centred. No doubt its

neglect is largely due to the discredit that has fallen upon the old ideas of judgment and of hell. A generation ago there were many who lived with their eyes fixed upon the great white throne and their minds full of the books that should be opened before it. And there were some for whom punishment after death was hideously real. For better or worse that particular fear and the earnestness produced by it have passed away. We can no longer use the metaphors of our forefathers, and in rejecting the metaphors we are apt to reject the reality behind them. Yet surely the picture in the Fourth Gospel, "This is the way men are judged; there is a light come into the world—and men loved darkness," remains and is not less searching. Here and now, by what we do, we are being judged, or rather we are judging ourselves; and the standard has been set once for all by Christ. And if there is no extra punishment beyond the fact that we have done wrong and that not all our tears can undo it, is this less terrible than flames? The portrait of Dorian Gray is true of us all: every thought, and word and deed leaves its mark; and there are moments in the lives of us all when the phantasm of ourselves fades and we are compelled to see what our characters stripped bare of illusion really are. Hell has no terror so cruel as those times of self-revelation.

And that is not the worst. If the result of our sin were merely the staining of our own souls, we might well feel it to be a matter for argument: so much immediate gratification against the corresponding penalty. It might be worth while sinning, if we could undo it or even suffer its consequences alone. "I've been a wrong 'un, padre, and I'll have to pay for it: but I'll take my whacking like a man," said a strapping Irish subaltern to me in one of those bursts of sudden confidence which came to us under fire; and his words represent a very general

and rather splendid paganism. Thanks to the exaggerated stress upon personal damnation, many of the best and most romantic of our people feel that their sin is their own affair, that if they choose to imperil their souls, they will gladly pay for their misdeeds, and that there is something wrong with the man who regards virtue as a profitable investment. The folly of it is that we should ever have thought that we could bear our own sins or that the penalty fell principally on ourselves. The fact is, of course, that when I choose wrong, others suffer, others pay for it. The punishment falls first and most heavily upon those I love best, my wife, my little children : but the whole world is eventually the loser by it, and multitudes whom I have never seen draw poison from it. "No man dieth unto himself." History is full of terrific examples of the vast consequences of acts apparently trivial. If we could trace the effects of our own decisions, however personal and private they may seem, we should be amazed and crushed. All and every sin involves the suffering of the innocent : that is what makes acquiescence in evil impossible to decent people, a thing intolerably caddish and unmanly. So long as I think that the chief sting of sin is its effect on myself, then I may shrug my shoulders and do it. The risk of punishment only adds a piquancy to my indulgence. No ordinary red-blooded person is going to be restrained by selfish fear. But once I realise that my pleasure means another's pain, that I cannot pay my own reckoning or save my best-loved from their share of the price, then whatever spark of feeling there remains in me is revolted.

When first this sense of the horror of evil breaks upon us, our self-esteem is shaken ; and a little reflection, if we are honest, will emphasise the blow. It is useless to say "I am no worse than others," or "I never did anyone any harm," when one is face to face with Christ crucified,

and realises that His death is the consequence of just such lives as ours. Mr. Bernard Shaw has done us faithful service in showing once more that it is not merely the great crimes and deliberate rebellions against God that martyr the guiltless; that men of high principle, honest and fair and of good intention, find themselves persecuting the saints. No one with however slight a knowledge of his own ignorance and prejudice, of his subservience to tradition and fear, of his susceptibility to flattery and to the demands of expediency—no one who knows how feeble is his hold upon God—can face life lightheartedly or take a shallow view of sin. Christ upon Calvary, Christ bearing in His own body the burden of our sins, Christ crucified by us, must give the least imaginative pause.

This is the first stage of the process of change. To face the facts frankly, to strip off comfortable illusion and all the pretexts devised by our self-protective instincts, is to be brought to self-loathing and self-contempt. It is to be summoned to a study of the cause that has led us, respectable average persons, to such a downfall, and of the means whereby similar results can be escaped for the future. Cause and cure are indeed close akin. We have sinned not from this or that particular temptation—sins are only the symptoms of our disease—but because our lives are uninspired, because we are out of touch with God, because to a greater or less degree His will has been disregarded or denied. Our forgiveness and redemption consist in the rediscovery of His love, in the return to communion with Him, in the re-entry into that eternal life which is knowledge of and co-operation with our Father. The process is one of immediate reconciliation: its fulfilment depends ultimately upon no conditions whatsoever save our whole-souled acceptance; and for it there are no substitutes. The means of grace popularly so-called, prayers and sacraments, Bible-study and

corporate worship, preaching and priestly absolution, may be, and as history proves are, powerful stimulants, helping us to experience the divine presence: they do not necessarily condition it. Jesus swept them all away, when He said to the paralytic who had been trained to regard his disease as a proof of the wrath of God, and himself as cut off from salvation, "Child, thy sins are forgiven thee," or when He showed the prodigal "coming to himself." Christ, just because He first displayed and made possible the fulness of such life in God, is the Saviour and the only-begotten Son, but whatever helps men and women to realise their place in the family and their relationship to the eternal is a manifestation, however incomplete, of the divine Spirit; and if we are Christians and accept the test of fruits, the only test that has our Master's sanction, we dare not despise or condemn what has helped our brothers to live.

It is hardly necessary to point out how gravely such a conviction is travestied by much of our popular Christian teaching. Mankind is still in the age of taboos, of subservience to legalisms and formularies and schemes of salvation: we are not content with the largeness of Christ, but must impose upon it our own petty restrictions, setting ourselves and our methods up not merely as useful, which would be legitimate, but as essential, which is often a lie. No one will dispute, for example, that sudden conversions often occur—though their completeness is disastrously exaggerated; nor that the discipline of Confession is for many a valuable means to salvation; but when men refuse the name of Christian to those who cannot say "at such an hour I was reborn," or to those who find a priest a hindrance, they are blaspheming against the Holy Ghost.

Nevertheless, while God reveals Himself in many ways and we cannot lay down any limits to the influence of

His love, it is plain from the evidence of history that a unique power of transformation belongs to the Cross, that Christ crucified is uniquely the Saviour. This uniqueness arises partly from the character of our Lord as sinless and representative Man—One in whom male and female, Greek and Jew, bond and free recognise the perfect embodiment of their own highest quality, the supreme satisfaction of their own groping aspirations, One to whom they cannot but concede the value of God. It arises partly from the character of His passion, which is, as St. Paul claimed, in the true sense a “mystery,” a single dramatic event into which are condensed, and from which are illuminated, the deepest experiences of humanity; the diffused radiance which gives its dim glory to life on earth is caught up and focussed by Calvary into a clear and brilliant ray: all heroism, all suffering, all that hints at the wonder of life through death, is clarified by it; in that light worldly values are turned upside down, and the world’s meaning is changed. But chiefly it arises from the double effect which the Cross produces, from the double revelation contained in it. We need, as has been said, something to startle us into an understanding of the horror of sin: Calvary is the eternal expression of the suffering of the innocent, the supremely adequate picture of the effects of evil. Multitudes of lesser victims, indeed all our broken humanity, enforce the same lesson and carry out the same redemptive ministry: it needed the perfect Man, it needed God, to typify and consummate it all. But the vision of sin is not enough. The sight will produce revulsion, shame, humiliation; of itself it might leave us without hope. For it is not ignorance that is our chief tragedy, but weakness of will; and mere knowledge cannot save us. Experience proves over and over again that to show a man his true self and to exhort him to amend is useless. He can

gaze upon perfection, and feel nothing except his own impotence. If Christ is merely a type of the pain and of the splendour of humanity, He may suffice for those happy once-born souls who seem to possess in themselves a spring of courage and hope, who can of themselves arise and go to the Father as soon as they discover their exile. Many of us have too deep a sense of our weakness, are too constantly reminded of our helplessness, too baffled by the complexity of evil, too broken in the lost fight of virtue, to be capable of renewing the effort on such terms : for us there is need not of an example to imitate, or of a cause to serve, or of a master to obey, but of that which we find in Christ—a friend who can take on Himself our burdens, who can pour into us His power, who loves us and does not reject our love. The deepest and most redeeming experience in life comes to us when (if ever) we find that in our sin we are not left alone, that there is one who knows us through and through and sees our meanness and our shames, and loathes them, and yet does not cast us off. The sinner does not want mercy if mercy means the turning of a blind eye to his faults. He knows well enough that there is no such thing as forgiveness in the sense of a blotting out of the past : what has been done remains, and not all his tears can alter it or its consequences. The only thing that can save him is love, the influence of another who understands and inspires, who lifts him out of himself, and remakes his will, and constrains him to start afresh. Given such a friend, a resurrection from the death of sin becomes possible ; given such a friend, we can recover health and vision and the knowledge of God—we can be born again. And when, as in Christ, this friend is one whose character enthralls us, whose power to forgive is secured by history, then we can go forward in His strength, with joy.

Rebirth is indeed not too strong a term for the transformation thus involved, as any to whom it has come suddenly will testify. Before it they have been self-centred, seeking satisfaction on the surface, stifling the protests of their deeper yearnings, unable to find a single dominant purpose in life, aware of an inward conflict which they were afraid to investigate and unable to resolve. Self-protection tempts them to drug their aspirations and to live in and for the moment. The glimpses of God which were the birthright of all those made in His image merely cause them pain; the makeshift substitutes to which they dedicate themselves do not satisfy, in spite of the perverted ingenuity which indicates them and the ease with which habits of acquiescence are formed. Their lives either lack a real centre or are centred upon something whose true nature they dare not and perhaps cannot recognise; for men are indeed made for God; and God alone can satisfy them. It is no small part of the Christian's duty to recognise in his fellows this universal need, and so to live that he may make its satisfaction possible. To men so self-involved in whatever form God comes, whether through the slow process of growth or in the shattering experience of sudden discovery, the result is conversion. In many, perhaps in most, cases there is no single dramatic crisis: their inward conflict, never acutely recognised, is resolved by a succession of almost unconscious adjustments, until gradually the whole centre of interest inclines Godward. To others, and often in proportion to the intensity of their struggle and distress, the change comes in a moment: in a blaze of ecstatic wonder God takes possession of them and the whole orientation of their lives is violently altered. In such instances, whether in the classical cases of St. Paul and St. Augustine or

in the multitude of humbler ones, no language seems to be too strong to describe what has occurred.

It would be a mistake to limit the word conversion to this latter and sudden experience, or indeed to insist upon a rigid standard of normality. It is a natural corollary of the universality of Christianity and the variety of human beings that God reveals Himself to His children in very divers fashions. The whole subject is of profound interest to every disciple of Christ as well as to the theologian or the psychologist; and its study will have an important bearing upon ministerial work. Here we cannot pursue it in any detail: but will merely note two broad divisions in the experience of converts. To many, indeed probably to most, Christians conversion is definitely associated with an intense conviction of communion with the living Christ. They see the Lord in the way; and the vision is so plain and so palpably objective to them that it compels their acceptance of its truth. They are sure that they know Him on whom they have believed; and while fully aware of the power of auto-suggestion, of the tendency to "visualise" and of the likelihood of hallucination, they cannot in honesty satisfy themselves that their experience can be explained in any such terms. For them Christ is all and Christ is enough. They are prepared to stake their lives on the validity of their knowledge of Him. To others (and we believe they are as fully entitled to be called Christians) conversion is not so plainly linked up with the living Christ. Their experience is rather of God: their communion is with the Father. Though their whole conception of deity is coloured by Christ's revelation, though they yield to none in devotion to the one Lord, their fundamental contact is with the Godhead through Christ, rather than with Christ Himself. The living Jesus, so intimately real

to those of the former class, is not to them the central and dominant figure. Judged by their effects upon character, these two types of Christian experience would appear to be due to temperamental differences in the recipients : to the Trinitarian they will not seem surprising. At least they are a warning against laying down too dogmatically a test of what constitutes conversion.

This wide divergence of experience explains the difficulty of defining the process. Analogies to it have been suggested in the ecstasy of love at first sight, or in the thrill of discovery when, after years of patient research, the key to a crucial problem is found, or in the exultation which follows a moment of supreme crisis when the whole personality has expressed itself in an act of decision. But all such are in their measure inadequate : for conversion, at its richest, is more profoundly moving than any emotional upheaval or intellectual satisfaction or moral venture ; it includes and unifies the activities of heart and mind and will : it is an experience of the whole self, and is thus in all cases more akin to the impact of person upon person, to falling in love, than to the solution of a problem or the acceptance of a choice. Like all these, but in fuller degree, its effect is an intense bracing up and liberation of every element in the character, an uprush of power such as always follows the resolution of disharmonies. And in proportion as it ceases to be a mere revulsion of feeling and affects the whole man, its influence is permanent and indelible. Old habits may remain, temptations recur not less readily, the struggle against sin is life-long : but, however much we fail, there survives the conviction of an event too real to be denied or explained away. Earthly passions and interests may overlay and obscure the vision of God : the law in our members may often triumph : but in the presence of death, or when a crisis strips us naked to the core of our

being, we discover that the disloyalties are superficial, and that when all else fails God and God only abides; beneath the tumult there is the peace that passes understanding.

It is indeed under the test of whatever forces reality upon us, of great joy or great suffering, of bereavement or the presence of death, that the true verdict upon our spiritual state is disclosed to us. It is easy to take a superficial view of ourselves and of others, to accept a cheap assurance and much pious talk and habits of regular devotion as the evidence of a God-centred life: the tragedy of religion is that these things are so often compatible with an inward idolatry. It is not less easy to mistake the distractions and inconsistencies and weaknesses and sins for godlessness, and to overestimate what is in truth of the surface rather than the depths. But there are moments of self-knowledge, like those which reveal to us our sin, moments of detachment and sincerity when we pass beyond ambition and fear and discover the essential quality of our lives. At such a time the converted man finds humbly and with surprise that when all else is gone God remains—God more real than self.

There is no room here for complacency or what is too often meant by assurance, but which is really pharisaism. The soul for which God is supreme has no room for selfishness; its own state or destiny matters nothing; for it God is all in all. The idea of any external reward, of "glory for me," and of damnation for others, is wholly impossible: to know God is eternal life: and that knowledge is the casting out of self. We may perhaps use the language of mythology, the images of crowns and thrones and harps of gold, as appropriate to the wonder of the divine: to some its crudity is less repellent than to others. But at our peril we must not think of the joys of paradise as apart from, or additional to, the consciousness of God; and if such thought leads us to turn our

attention from His glory to our own blessedness it is doing the devil's work. We are alive or dead, in heaven or hell, here and now: our relationship to God alone determines which. In us all is the capacity for Him, some flickering spark of eternity: that is our birthright, His image in which we were made. Christ came to fan the spark into a flame that the nations might walk in the light. The Christian is His torch-bearer.

For indeed the converted life is not one solely of contemplation. Most of us are incapable of long and intimate communion, for the high vocation of mystic prayer. Our service is of a humbler sort—to go out into the world “holding up the lamp of life,” to serve our brethren, kindling them by contact to a fuller radiance and overcoming in ourselves the temptation to complacency or to sloth by active fellowship with them, to be missionaries of the Kingdom of God. To do so is a glorious but an easily misinterpreted privilege. It is so easy to condemn the world, so difficult to save it. How are we to fulfil our calling?

We can only judge ourselves, and as we love them our nearest and dearest. When we are called to advise or direct others, we can do so only after real diagnosis and with profound sympathy and understanding. For the cure of souls there is needed not only the power of analysing motive but the capacity for spontaneous and redemptive affection: unlike the doctor, who can hardly keep his judgment unbiassed unless he treats his patient as an abstract case, the spiritual director must use not only his head but his heart, and must treat his patient not as a case, but always as a person: otherwise he may discover, but he cannot heal, the disease. That is why the discipline of the confessional is so difficult. Its problems are not and cannot be academic or impersonal: they cannot be solved by cut-and-dried methods or by a

moral science, however exact. The confessor must have in addition to knowledge a spontaneous and intuitive sympathy. He cannot stand away from his patient and regard him *ab extra* : to do so is merely to diagnose and not to cure. He must be able to sink himself in understanding of his friend and fellow-servant, keeping his consciousness of God and of the prodigal, in order that through himself the two may be brought into contact. And experience shows that when such a condition is fulfilled, God works through us, and His redeeming love purifies and renews. Few have the double power. Very few can exercise it speedily, or regularly. And without it confession loses its chief value.

To be a bridge-builder, a fellow-worker with Christ in reconciling men with God, this is the priestly task of the Christian. And it is as difficult as glorious. The pastor of souls is not a mere psycho-analyst—though psycho-analysis is a necessary part of his work. He must also be so far God-possessed as to be able not only to criticise sickness, but to create health. It is great to reveal in a complex character the true source of spiritual inhibition : it is greater to bring the warped and stunted soul into touch with Him who alone can heal, and to administer in its appropriate form the medicine of the Spirit. Yet this and nothing less is the calling of the disciple. The rarity of qualified directors, the presumption which treats their work as the perquisite of a whole class, the substitution of "professional" and perfunctory methods for the most intimate fellowship, and the formalism and unreality that are almost inseparable from the habit of regular confessions, have been responsible for bringing the Church's system of penance into suspicion. Psychology, while emphasising the value of self-knowledge and of the removal of repressions, has emphasised also the difficulties and danger of inexpert or superficial

treatment. All of us would admit that the patient cure of souls is the Christian minister's highest duty. Many of us are doubtful whether the traditional usage of the confessional is the best means at our disposal; and in view of its effects are convinced that its wholesale practice by ill-qualified persons or at specified intervals is a perversion of our duty. In particular the notion that any priest by sole virtue of the grace of orders is capable of exercising so delicate a task seems to depend upon a theory of the action of the Holy Spirit which is false to the facts and indistinguishable from crude magic.

What is unquestionably needed is that in our conception of the functions of a parson we should lay much more stress upon his personal contact with God, upon his knowledge of the psychology of sin and of forgiveness, and upon his sympathy in dealing with individuals. At present when the clergy are expected to preach and teach, to conduct services and "run" parochial organisations, to preside at meetings, administer relief, foster clubs and societies, attend social festivities, take the lead in local affairs, and generally interest themselves in everything under the sun, the patient and exacting performance of this supreme ministry is apt to be neglected or scamped. To love God and one's neighbour is our primary duty; and to fulfil it is not necessarily to immerse oneself in a whirl of engagements or to become the slave of the ecclesiastical machine.

We have treated this question of the conversion and training of souls at some length because the importance of it is essential to our view of the Christian life: and before concluding this essay it will be well to add a few words in summary. We have urged that whereas sin is now as ever the enemy, and the salvation of sinners is the great achievement of Christianity, the process needs to be re-interpreted and the methods reconsidered.

The tendency to divide rigidly all human beings into the two classes of sheep and goats is mistaken. Our Lord used the simile to describe the final judgment: here on earth we are all unprofitable servants, who dare not pass sentence upon one another. God does not deal in mass production: there are no "average individuals." To adopt stereotyped and legalistic systems in dealing with spiritual problems is to regress from the exacting liberty of the Gospel to the formalism of the Law. Men and women differ enormously in their responsiveness to God and in the quality of their highest experience. Conversion is a process varying in its character according to the capacity and temperament. Means of grace are means, not ends; and no one of them is necessarily universal in its applicability. Those whose whole nature and outlook is permeated by their communion with God can so reflect His presence that others by their peculiar and varying channels can receive His inflowing and be changed by it. "The world," as Mr. Shaw makes his penitent ecclesiastic declare, "is saved by God and His saints": neither revivalist emotion, nor sacramental grace, nor penitential discipline, nor any method, however authoritative, can be prescribed as a necessary condition of salvation: but an earnest use of such means as have approved themselves to the tradition of Christendom cannot be neglected, and all of them, provided it is never forgotten that they are means, not ends, have high value. Those who would be God's ministers must strive like St. Paul to fill themselves with His manifold life, walking in the Spirit; and to mediate that life in the mode appropriate to each individual, becoming all things to all men.

For our calling one qualification is supreme, devotion to Jesus Christ. Though conversion in the true sense is the discovery of God, and though we would not deny that those who come to God without knowledge of Christ

are truly converted, yet we are convinced that in Christ alone is the very image of the Father, that from Christ alone can a full conception of God and man be discovered, and that for the Christian Christ is God since his deepest experience is inextricably bound up with the person of the Incarnate. The achievements of Jesus, and above all of Jesus crucified, have been proved through the centuries to contain a unique power of regeneration, of bringing mankind out of death into life. The multitudes to whom their Master is a living presence, the source of every God-centred motive, the consummation of every God-seeking aspiration, testify to the continuous validity of the characteristic Christian conviction: His "Lo, I am with you always" is as true now as ever; and the recognition of it, the practice of His presence, is our salvation.

CHARLES E. RAVEN.

V

THE INDWELLING CHRIST

WHEN our Lord wished to sum up in one concise phrase the normal relationship which ought to exist between Himself and His disciples, He said in words recorded or paraphrased for us by the fourth Evangelist, "Abide in Me and I in you." When St. Paul speaks of his own and the early Christians' normal experience of the Lord he says, "Christ liveth in me," "Christ dwells in your hearts," "We are vitally united with Christ," "We are in Christ;" and when the fourth Evangelist at the close of the New Testament age describes in his own words the permanent consciousness of the average Christian, he says, "We know that we abide in Him and He in us." A union with Christ so close that the Christian can say "Christ dwells in me and I in Him" is *the* characteristic and essential experience which we call the Christian experience.

INTERPENETRATION OF PERSONALITY

What does all this mean in our modern thought and language? First let us seek a general expression in modern terms for this union of Christ and the Christian, and then try to throw further light on it.

The best way of expressing it is to say that it is the interpenetration of the loving personality of the believer with the loving personality of Jesus Christ. If we carry our minds back to the historic source of this union, we

shall see how true this description becomes. When the first disciples had intercourse with Jesus in Galilee and Judæa, they were in actual contact with another personality who was not only human but divine. His personality did actually influence them profoundly. He penetrated into their beings, making them different from what they had been, and they in turn lived within the circle of His influence. There was a real degree of union between them, greater or less according as they responded to His influence. It was possible for Him then to say, "Abide in Me and I in you."

After the resurrection, ascension, and the day of Pentecost, those same disciples, and others who joined their company, received a tremendous spiritual experience, which took two forms and was described by them in two ways.

1. They found themselves possessed by a great power which enabled them to love each other fervently and sincerely, bound them together into a closely welded fellowship, sent them forth to witness boldly before the world, and—not least—quickened their powers of insight into the meaning of their Lord's life and teaching and death and resurrection. This power they recognised as the Holy Spirit, who Christ had promised would come. They knew that they were "filled with the Holy Spirit."

2. Side by side with this first experience there was another. They became certain, with a certainty which dawned gradually, but grew by degrees to the brightness of a permanent noontide, that the man Jesus whom they had seen in the flesh still lived in the spiritual world, still perfectly human and yet transcendently divine, and that this same Jesus was in contact with them in an intensely close relationship, a relationship which was humanly personal, although His divinity enhanced the power and intimacy and depth of the relationship beyond anything

which they had experienced in the days of His flesh. They were certain that Jesus their friend and master was as humanly available for them as ever before. They felt the interpenetration of their human personalities by the personality of the ever-living Christ. When His personality thus streamed into their innermost beings, they said, "Christ liveth in me." They knew themselves to be caught up into the shelter and invigorating atmosphere and unifying force of His personality, and they said, "We are in Christ."

These two experiences of being "filled with the Holy Spirit," and being "in Christ and Christ in us," were so closely related together in the lives of the disciples that they came to see that they were one and the same experience looked at from different points of view. We have not space here to go deeply into the theology of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, but the most important thing for us to notice is that the Holy Spirit was to the disciples "the Spirit of Christ," the Spirit which came forth from their Master in heaven and penetrated into their souls, the spirit of Christ's own personality coming forth from Him in *personal forces* which played upon and moulded their personalities, teaching them the same lessons, guiding them further in the same directions, stirring them to the same kinds of moral effort that Christ Himself had done. They found that the greatest of all the great works which "the fulness of the Holy Spirit" brought about in their lives was the close sense of personal contact with Christ which we have described. The coming of the Holy Spirit was the coming of Christ Himself to them to dwell in them, and they in Him.¹

¹ The following passages illustrate most clearly this relation between the Holy Spirit and the Indwelling Christ: John xiv. 16, 18; Rom. viii. 9 ff.; 2 Cor. iii. 17. Prof. Swete's comment upon these passages is, "The Spirit in its working was found to be in effect the equivalent of Jesus Christ. . . . The possession of the

Now this experience of personal union with Christ Himself through the Holy Spirit has been, with varying degrees of intensity, the unique possession of the true disciples of Christ down the ages of the Church from New Testament days, and it is our possession to-day. It is the interpenetration of our personalities by the loving personality of Jesus Christ. It is vital Christianity, and we need now to ask certain questions, and to give the answers clearly in terms of our modern thought and conditions of life, in such a way that the experience may become real in our lives to-day as it was in the days of the New Testament.

UNION WITH CHRIST—THE MEDIA OF RELATIONSHIP

By what means does the personality of Jesus Christ come into contact with ours to-day? In the days of His flesh it was through His human body that His disciples received His influence, through His voice, His actions, and the constant "suggestions" conveyed to them by His whole manner of life. Now that His body of the flesh is no longer seen or heard, how does He influence us? The answer is that there are many media by which our Lord Jesus Christ puts Himself into touch with us and *pours forth into us the personal forces of His own Being*. We are surrounded by influences at all times, playing upon us from many directions, which are nothing more or less than the living Christ Himself penetrating our personalities by means of certain media.

I. First there is a channel which is often unrecognised

Spirit of Christ is clearly regarded as tantamount to an indwelling of Christ Himself" (*The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 300 ff.). Yet both St. Paul and the fourth Evangelist are equally clear in emphasizing, a separateness of the Spirit from the Son, which in Theology leads to the doctrine of the Trinity.

by the Christian as a way by which Christ enters into him. Everything that is beautiful and good and true in our experience of the world of nature and man around us can bring the Personality of Christ into us. God as a personal being is showing us His mind through them, as though a friend were to bring to us a picture which he had painted and say, "This is what I have painted," and we were to receive through this means the inflow of his personality into ours. It would be a false idea to limit our reception of Christ to things directly related to the historic Incarnation. The God whose personality is communicated to ours through the beauties of Nature and art, through the truth of science, and the general goodness of human life, is one with the living Christ, the everlasting Word, who stands behind them and thus seeks to make us aware of Himself, and to teach us His character. Again, the contact of all loving people, of whatever creed, is intended to bring to us something of Christ. All good literature, and good words spoken to us, known to be good because they are in accord with the mind of Christ, should be thankfully recognised and appreciated as actual means whereby He is seeking to come to us and abide in us.

2. A far more direct and intimate way by which He has union with us is through the words of the Gospel writings. Words are a powerful medium by means of which we can convey to each other the very essence of our souls. The words of Christ, spoken in Galilee and Judæa, were then at that time emanations from His inmost personality which entered into His disciples and dwelt in them. "If *my words* abide in you," He said, as almost synonymous with "Let *Me* abide in you." But the mind and character of Christ are the same now as then. By reading His words in a receptive spirit we are picking up and allowing to pass into ourselves those

eternal waves of personal influence. Christ speaks and lives before us again in the present. His word is—so to speak—a part of His body. Similarly, all the apostolic writings bring Christ into actual contact with us, transmitted through the personal experiences and interpretations of His intimate followers. Behind our New Testament, as we now read it, there stands the Living Christ, and through it He unites Himself to us.

3. Another channel is the Church of Christ, the Fellowship of all those in whom Christ dwells. When the true disciples of Christ are gathered together in His name, whether many or few, whether in an organised group or spontaneously, Christ is in varying measure the very spirit of that group, and He uses it as a corporate means through which to exercise His personal influence on those whom that group touches, whether a member of the group or one outside. It may be their corporate prayers, or the atmosphere of their common worship, or some expression of their common mind, or their corporate service—whichever it may be, it provides a means whereby Christ Himself can pour Himself into the personalities of those to whom the group speaks, for whom it prays, and whom it serves. To live within the fellowship of Christ's Church is to live within range of vital personal forces which issue from Him, and it is therefore a vital means whereby we abide in Him and He in us.

4. Few would wish to dispute that one of the intensest ways in which Christ enters into them is through the influence of other individual disciples of Christ. The Christian preacher or teacher or writer, just in so far as he is Christian, is Christ Himself giving Himself to us through the personality of His disciple. Whether we recognise it or not the Christian friend is a Christ-conductor who in an infinite variety of ways delivers the current of Christ's

own personality into ours. How far are our eyes open to the Christhood of our Christian friends?

5. Let us now pass to a deeper region of experience. There are times when the personality of Christ acts upon us without the use of any external means at all. We have all of us had some experience such as this. We stop to think of Christ alone in the secret place of our consciousness. Our bodies may be busy in the service of others at the time, or we may be quiet in the attitude of prayer. Our spirits are silent towards Christ. There comes to us the consciousness of His Presence. Noble thoughts arise in our minds, pure emotions spring to the level of consciousness, our wills are energised to act. We feel and know the Presence of Jesus Christ. It is tremendously real and glorious. In every generation there have been Christians who have had this experience. They believe it is the immediate action of the personality of Christ upon their own personalities, and there is no valid reason for doubting their belief. We receive suggestions from other human beings through regions of the mind below the level of consciousness: and it may be that the influence of Christ is similarly received. Be that as it may, it is Christ Himself who comes and touches our personalities with His own.

6. The Sacrament of Holy Communion was given to us as a special means whereby we might evermore dwell in Him and He in us. People often communicate with each other and influence each other through symbols—in fact the language of symbol is often more expressive than the language of words. In the Holy Communion Christ has given us a symbolic act, rich and expressive in its width and depth of meaning, and has made it a means by which He may manifest His presence to our inmost consciousness and pass Himself into the secret places of

our souls. He so manifests Himself in the whole service that our union with Him is realised and enhanced. All the other means of union are combined together in one broad channel, by which He makes Himself known to us in all the values of what He is, and so finds a ready entrance into our personal beings, feeding us with His very self. From that meeting we go back to daily life to use more consistently all the other means at our disposal for remaining in union with our Lord.

While our Lord is seeking to give Himself to us along these various channels, it is our part to surrender ourselves loyally and trustfully to Him; to keep ourselves within range of Him; to train our eyes to see the inwardness of beauty; to read and meditate upon His matchless words; to live as an active member of the Christian Fellowship; to make Him the third in every friendship; and often to silence our spirits that He may speak to us in prayer and sacrament. That is the meaning of His command "Abide in Me and I in you."

UNION WITH CHRIST IN ACTUAL EXPERIENCE

A further question now arises. What actually happens within us as the personality of Christ acts upon ours? In answering this question we must remember that it is a spiritual inter-action of two personalities one upon the other, one divine-human, the other human. Our human personalities are deep and complex. Jesus Christ radically affects every single part of them, purifying, enhancing, transforming them. He powerfully influences our thoughts, our emotions and our wills, affecting them separately and yet all together, and He reaches our personalities not only in the conscious sphere of life, but also in the subconscious.

I. Union with Christ in our thought-life.

Our thought-life is always going on during the whole of our conscious existence, and it takes many forms. Sometimes we are trying to reason something out. At another time we are trying to see the meaning of some thing or event. We may be conjuring up in our minds some memory of the past. Again, the mind may have formed the picture of some desired object or end, and that image is acting as a kind of magnet which is drawing the action of the whole man towards it. This force of imagination appears often to work in the subconscious sphere. Finally there are our ideals, the greatest of all objects or ends which we have set before ourselves to be reached. They have gripped our imagination, and are a permanent driving force in our lives.

Now our thought-life is widely open to the influence of the thoughts that come to us from other persons. Other human personalities as they come into contact with us affect our thoughts in a variety of ways. They may help us to reason, they may give us information, they may show us the meaning of something which we had not understood. Most of the "suggestions" which are at work in our minds come to us from other people.

Jesus Christ has a perfect thought-life. His mind is the noblest, purest, and truest that our minds can conceive. All Truth and Goodness and Beauty are in Him. Moreover, His thoughts are always active. He is always seeking to influence our thought-life by the contact of His own thought-life. We have seen how He comes into contact with us along many avenues, and whenever He comes it is always in order that He may quicken our thoughts into true and pure activity. If we keep ourselves constantly in contact with Him, so that our thoughts are inter-

penetrated by His, then wonderful things happen to our minds. We begin to see things from His point of view. We see the true meaning of all things, not merely the superficial meaning that is often mistaken for the true. Pure, noble, forceful suggestions grip our minds, and work their way out into action. Good dispositions are formed out of the ideas which He imparts. Our ideals become fashioned after Christ's ideals. In a word, the whole of our mental life, concerning which modern psychology is making so many discoveries, gradually grows into a complete harmony with Christ, so that all our motives are related to Him. Through constant abiding in Christ, our thought-life becomes transformed by His, and ultimately it will become possible to say, "We have the mind of Christ."

2. *Union with Christ in our emotional life.*

Our emotions are a tremendous reservoir of energy, which, as they are let loose, govern our thoughts and actions far more than we think. They are like compressed springs ever seeking to liberate their energy. Now there are two vital things about our emotional life—the stimulus which excites them into energy, and the direction in which the energy excited is allowed to flow. Emotions are splendid things if they can be called into play by the right kind of stimulus, and can be let loose along worthy channels of expression.

As we walk through life we are by the very nature of our existence exposed to stimuli to our emotions from all sides, sometimes violent, sometimes quiet. We cannot escape them. But *the nature of the emotion called into activity depends entirely upon what the mind sees in the stimulus.* A serpent would not frighten a tiny child, but it would scare a man. A mad dog in a street would make

a cowardly man run away in terror, but it would make a brave man attack it in order to kill it. So we might go on with every stimulus that comes.

The person who is in union with Christ, and whose thought-life has therefore been trained to see things from Christ's point of view, will gradually learn to see the true and pure meaning of every stimulus as it comes, and so each stimulus will call up the right set of emotions in relation to itself. An angry word is spoken. One man sees in it an attack upon his person, and is immediately roused to un-Christian resentment. The Christian sees in it simply an occasion for Christlike pity and fighting for the good of the man who betrayed his need by speaking the angry word. A picture may stir the Christless man simply to sex-emotion, but if it be pure, the Christian will see in it an object of reverence for beauty, and wonder at the self-sacrifice of womanhood; while if it be sensuous it will call forth his fierce antagonism to evil. So everything may be seen by us from Christ's point of view, and we may walk through life with our emotions entirely under His control. It is as though Christ's emotions become our emotions.¹ It is the result of abiding in Christ.

As Christ transforms the stimulus and makes it good, so also He offers Himself as the end towards which our every emotion may be directed. Once our emotions are stirred, the energy belonging to them is bound to seek a channel of action along which to pour itself. It may be a line of imaginative thought, or a word spoken, or deed done, but *something* must happen. We may, if we are capable of it, turn the stream underground into our subconscious mind by suppressing it, but there is much evidence which goes to show that, if we do this, the result

¹ Cp. Phil. i. 8.

is harmful to mind and nerves alike. But this need not be done. If we are living in union with Jesus Christ, we shall consciously make Him the ultimate goal of every emotion. Whatever the immediate object may be towards which our energy travels, at the end there is Jesus Christ, like the ocean which receives into itself all the rivers and streams that flow. Christ is to be found in the whole world of nature and of men, save where falsehood, ugliness and sin abide, and even then He is present to evoke our loyalty to Him in the fight against all that hurts His brethren. There never need be a moment or occasion when we cannot be living "unto Him." There will be times when He is the immediate object of our emotions, such as when we prostrate ourselves before Him in love, reverence, wonder, and praise. But we have it on our Lord's own authority that all service done to the least of His brethren is done to Him, and brings to Him satisfaction and joy. The whole of our active life may thus be lived to Christ. For those who have eyes to see it, every act of service done for another under the stress of a pure emotion may be a means of union with the Christ, who ever lives not only in the transcendent heavens, but also in the lives of His little ones who are in any kind of need.

There is yet a further meaning of this direction of our emotional energy towards Christ. There are times when it is physically impossible, or socially undesirable, or morally wrong to satisfy our emotions by releasing them upon the particular stimulus which has called them into play. It is possible, however, to find another object upon which to expend them. A childless woman may be very motherly to the children of others. The fighting instinct may be satisfied in a clean but strenuous game. Those who are familiar with psychological terminology will

recognise in this the important process called the sublimation of the instincts.

3. *Union with Christ in our volitional life.*

The will is the most mysterious and most potent of all the functions of our personality, and it is also generally recognised to be the highest. It is a matter of enthralling interest to all those who desire to follow Christ, that they should discover how their wills can be strengthened to conquer temptation and to do the good that they wish to do. It is one of the greatest elements in the Christian Gospel, that Christ enables us to overcome sin and fills us with positive energies of holiness. Let us therefore see what are the four main processes by which the will is affected, and how Jesus Christ penetrates into the very will of the man who is in union with Him, in order to strengthen it.

The will is entirely a matter of *attention*.¹ If we hold some thought or the idea of some action in the centre of our imagination, concentrate on it, attend to it with all the powers of our mind, then that is the thought which we shall go on thinking, and that is the action which we

¹ It will be useful here to bear in mind that, although for the purposes of analysis we are considering our mental, emotional, and volitional life separately, yet the personality of a man is a unity, and moves as a whole. In any movement of the personality thought, feeling, and will—all three—come into play. Yet at any given moment one of the three is generally more prominent than the other two, and so we speak of a man "thinking," when thought is prominent, though he cannot be thinking without also feeling and willing to some extent; and here in this paragraph we speak of him as "willing" because we are considering those supreme moments when his will is prominent, though he is also thinking and feeling.

We need also to remember that any particular act of the will is largely determined by the whole body of past experience, personal and inherited, which forms the content of the mind. Yet there is always (except in case of mental disease) a real element of freedom for choice, and it is with this that we are now concerned.

shall perform. The idea of all other acts will fade away from our consciousness. Effort of attention is the essential form of volition, and temptation is largely a question of what we are going to attend to. If directly two conflicting desires appear in the field of consciousness, one being recognised as higher, and the other as lower, we can focus our attention on the higher, and hold it there, then attention will bear fruit in action. Now it must be noticed that attention is governed by interest : in the last analysis we attend to what interests us most.

Jesus Christ influences our wills by providing us with an all-absorbing, supremely interesting object of attention, to which we may turn immediately in our hour of need. In place of the unworthy or even base objects which seek to force themselves upon our attention He substitutes Himself in all His strength and attractiveness. He asks us to attend to Him. By concentrating the energy of our minds and imaginations on Christ we withdraw them from tending in any other direction. Let us remember here that everything in human life and thought that is pure and good and beautiful *is* Christ,¹ so that to think of them in relation to Christ is to think of Christ. So when a choice for good has to be made, the form our prayer should take ought not to be any thought at all about the evil alternative, for that is to attend to it with the probable result of doing it, but it ought to be a concentration of our attention on the thought or act which is worthy, associating it with Jesus Christ Himself. If we are in union with Christ, then our thought of Him will be so full of interest that it will be a matter of effortless attention to keep "looking unto Jesus," and so to overcome.

Here we pass over to the region of the *imagination*. As often as not that the moment comes when we must decide

¹ See p. 81.

whether we shall attend to the good or the evil, the matter seems to have been settled for us beforehand by the imagination. Sometimes, for example, it is the evil thought or action that holds the field, and the imagination works with a terrible inevitableness towards the evil end. And along with the imagination there is a fear that we may fall, which soon grows to a certainty that we shall. On the other hand there are times when the good is easily and immediately found to be the centre of our imagination, and along with it there goes a buoyant certainty that we can and shall act accordingly. A strong imagination and a firm confidence will always ride triumphantly together to victory. The business of the will therefore is to choose beforehand such imaginations as will store the mind with power for the critical hour, and above all to choose to be absolutely confident that victory can and will be achieved. The ultimate question then arises: Is there any such store of imaginations from which we may fill our minds, and is there any ground for our certainty that we shall succeed?

Jesus Christ is the answer to both these questions. We have already seen that His thoughts and ideals, summed up in the perfect example of His earthly life, are an all-powerful source of pure and strong imaginations for the disciple, whose thought-life is in union with Christ. And added to this we have the incontrovertible certainty that we *can* translate those imaginations into deeds. For by contact with Christ there is communicated to the mind of the Christian a potent suggestion of victory, based not upon the thin air of fancy, but upon the solid rock of an objective fact. This fact is that Jesus Christ as man met and overcame the full shock of human temptation during his life, but supremely when He was dying upon the Cross. The powers of evil rolled up all their massed forces

against Him there, but He shook them off from Him, revealing in Himself as man an exhaustless reservoir of moral power. Temptation in its ultimate form has been conquered in man : it can be conquered again in us men so long as we are living within the magnetic influence of His personality. It is thus that we are "crucified with Christ," and that we "reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." This happens every time that it is put to the test. And it happens, as has been said, not so much by a conscious effort of will directed against the evil, as by a confident imagination of the victory already achieved by us along with Christ, or by Christ in us, whichever way we like to think of it. This amazing experience of victory over temptation which comes to those who at the moment of struggle commit themselves in confidence to the power of Christ, knowing that as He overcame we shall overcome, is Christ's use of this psychological process of our minds, created by Him in order that He may thus use it.

It is maintained by one of our leading English psychologists that at the moment of moral choice the instinct which more than any other plays a decisive part in the struggle is the instinct of *self-regard*. There are convincing reasons for believing that this is so. We all of us have the instinct of self-regard or self-respect inborn within us, and it develops throughout our life. We are consciously or unconsciously playing to the "gallery" all the time. With some the "gallery" never gets beyond the social circle in which they live. There are scores of occasions in such lives when a temptation is easily overcome in public which would quickly be succumbed to in private. The highest refinement of the gallery is the ideal which we have accepted and made our own, and which demands that we should live up to it.

It is this demand of our highest selves which is perhaps the strongest influence of all upon our wills, and when we fail, the deepest misery is caused by the criticism not of our fellows but of our better selves.

Jesus Christ raises to its highest possible pitch this most potent factor in the exercise of our wills. He has shown us what we are worth by dying for us. He has shown us what we are capable of by living the perfect life before our eyes. He is the supreme critic, higher even than our highest selves, the real "gallery" before whom we live our lives. When we are living in the constant consciousness of His personal presence, the thought of His "Well done" brings a tremendous reinforcement to our wills in the hour of temptation.

These are the ways in which Christ brings His personality to bear upon ours, causing certain victory again and again, with the result that the *habit* of victory is formed. Our minds most easily attend to those ideas which have received most attention in the past, our wills act most readily in the direction in which they have acted before. By degrees, as our wills become more and more interpenetrated with the personality of Christ, we attain that strength and serenity of character where victory has become a habit, and where the moral energy of our lives can be spent, not in the struggle against sordid desires, but in the service of our tempted brethren.

UNION WITH CHRIST—ITS PERMANENCE

A vital question now concerns us. Is this union of Christ and the Christian man a permanent thing? Is the mutual interpenetration of personality, as we have termed it, a process which is intermittent in its operation, as it might be in the case of two human personalities?

The answer is that the union goes far deeper than this. It is true that we can only describe the union in terms which we already know, namely, interaction of human personalities; we can only actually experience Christ as the exalted Jesus, whose influence is felt by us in the ways we have been considering. But the Christian faith, based upon the teaching of the New Testament, is that because Christ is more than a mere exalted man, but is also God, therefore the influence of His personality penetrates into ours more closely and more vitally than in any human relationship. Even human persons do seem to grow into each other during life in a permanent union which they can hardly conceive of as ever being severed. Our union with Christ begins at a level more fundamental than anything in human relationships, and from that beginning we grow into Christ, and Christ into us. We are not always conscious of Christ's influence upon us, but once the union has begun His influence never ceases. He is always pouring Himself into us at the sources of our being. We are always "in Christ" so long as our whole attitude towards Him is one of receptiveness and loyalty. Our conscious recognition of His activity is bound to be intermittent—it is often far more intermittent than it need be, to our great loss. But we are in the grip of a greater personality than our own, and at any moment when we turn to Him, we find that we are in Him and He in us.

UNION WITH CHRIST—ITS RELATION TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

We have already noticed that in the Apostolic days the experience of the Living Christ was inseparable from the gift of the Holy Spirit. The simplest phrase that could be found to combine these two experiences was "The

Spirit of Christ dwelleth in you." It is very doubtful whether we shall ever be able to get very much further than this as an explanation. If we feel compelled to attempt some answer in order to satisfy the questionings of our intellects, we may say that when we think of our Incarnate God objectively as a Person outside of us, we speak of Him as Jesus Christ, but when we think of the influence of His personality at work subjectively within us, then we speak of the Holy Spirit. But in experience we do not find any such separation, and devotion demands a single object for our worship and faith. As a matter of daily Christian life we are in intimate relationship with our Living Lord. His Spirit takes all the initiative in quickening our personalities into fuller response to Him, and in making Him the supreme reality of our lives.

CONCLUSION

It is not easy to speak of the results of such a union without seeming to be a little unreal and over-idealistic. Yet there are certain fruits which will appear at once in the life of one who enters into such a relationship with Christ, and they will grow and ripen as the relationship becomes a permanent habit. Some of them have been hinted at already.

There will be freedom from the fear of sin. Fear does deadly injury to the mind of man, and it is the worst enemy of spiritual health. A constant cause of terror is the fear of being beaten by one's lower self, a fear which is only too well grounded on the experience of past failure. Christ dwelling within us sets us altogether free from this fear. He restores that confidence without which the personality cannot flourish and grow. Along with freedom

goes harmony of mind and spirit. Life is an incessant struggle between the higher and the lower elements of our nature. The ideal personality is one in which there is such an harmonious working together of the many powers of the mind, that the struggle becomes an ordered conflict issuing in continuous victory. When all parts of our mental life are related to Christ and are under His control, complete harmony and victory ensue.

The consequence of freedom and harmony is that our true God-given selves, which had become perverted and disorganised and corrupted through sin, now have a healthy atmosphere in which to grow to that maturity which was originally purposed for them in the mind of God their creator. The only possible environment for full self-expression and self-development on every higher side of our nature is the environment of Christ's perfect personality. There is a spark of divine life in all men, an immanence of God in the human soul, which is best conceived of as the striving purpose of God for that soul. It is thwarted and repressed by human obstinacy. But when we turn our souls towards Christ, in whom there lives all human perfection, then that purpose of God for us is set free and grows unhindered to its destined form. The immanence of God and the indwelling of Christ form together a single force urging us from behind and drawing us from ahead in complete sympathy, carrying us onward with the due consent and co-operation of our individual choice.

The final result of such a life is power. Wherever there is life and harmony and victory, there is power. Energy is released from the springs of our being. The strength of Christ's personality is imparted to ours. We become channels through which the energy of life can be transmitted to other personalities. In this way we fulfil the object for which we exist, to be perfect social beings,

whose primary aim is not to enjoy the pleasures of the spiritual life, but to communicate to others all that is in us and that passes through us. The greatest and most powerful gift we have to give is the Christ who dwells within.

“He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.”

R. T. HOWARD.

VI

“CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE”

THAT great teacher of a past generation, Professor H. M. Gwatkin, has an illuminating phrase in one of his books to the effect that, sharply separated as human personalities seem to be on the surface, down below the separating wall is found to be built on arches. All psychological investigation since his day tends to confirm that view. It is increasingly clear that the hidden deeps of personality contain potencies that are as yet imperfectly understood. It is also clear that there are mysterious but remarkably close connections in these subterranean regions between different personalities. The word “influence” is strictly accurate. There is, seemingly, like the sea round an indented coast, an ever-flowing tide washing in and out among the innumerable nooks and crannies—each fissure with its own shape and place, but all alike open to the moving water. And on that tide are borne the instincts, the thoughts, the passions which, in ever-varying combinations, form the guiding forces in the life of man, the forces which shape human character and determine human conduct.

This solidarity of human life is no discovery of our own age, though perhaps we know more than our fathers did about its nature, and are learning something fresh both of its dangers and its value. We have also learnt that only to very, very few is it given to be, in the true sense of the word, original: for all the rest thoughts and motives and principles are derived from some source or

sources outside themselves. To the nature and variety of the influences which all the time are playing upon their personality, many men give never a thought. To others the question is one of deep concern. Which of the many forces pressing in upon their life should be encouraged, which resisted? Is there any absolute standard of truth and goodness? Is there any certain source of illumination and of strength for travellers on life's highway? Is there a fixed pole by which man may confidently set the compass of his conscience and his highest spiritual aspirations?

To these questions Christianity, and Christians, return an unhesitating affirmative. Indeed Christianity stands or falls with the claim that there has been given, through a human personality on the stage of history, a clear, sufficient, authoritative revelation of what God is and of what man may be. For Christians, the true standard of life exists, not in the dream land of some ideal realm, but concretely embodied in a human life. It would otherwise be unreal to speak of a "standard." As a recent writer has justly observed, "the Universal Beauty must create a picture before I can say, I see. Universal Goodness must perform an action before I can say, I love. Universal Truth must have a biography before I can say, I understand."¹ Christians claim that in Jesus of Nazareth there is to be found just such a picture and such a biography: that He was one without flaw in all His thinking and living, a moral and spiritual genius without a peer before or since.

But Christianity goes even further than this. Other religions have produced, on paper if not in life, remarkably lofty ethical ideals. They have been exacting in their moral demands, and profuse in their exhortations. This do and thou shalt live. It has remained for Christianity to offer, and to provide, the secret of the doing.

¹ G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, *The Wicket Gate*, p. 82.

It is characteristic of the religion of Christ to say, not simply you *must*, but you *can*; and then to show how that "can" may become an accomplished fact. And Christianity achieves this by laying emphasis not so much on a standard to be reached or an example to be copied, as on a life to be shared. Christianity does not say that any common man can reproduce the unique spiritual genius of Jesus Christ. But it does say that any common man who keeps near enough to Jesus can and does catch something of the magic quality of that amazing life.

That, in a word, is the theme of this chapter. I am not now trying to expound, from a disciple's point of view, how this "infection" works, or to describe the wonder and joy of such a companionship; that is the theme of other chapters in this book. My task, at the moment, is simply to look at this supreme life which is the inspiration of all lesser life, and to seek to set down in words, poor words, a very little something of its quality and secret—a task which will tax all the insight and reverence and imaginative sympathy which writer and readers possess.

At the outset of our task it may be well to emphasise, quite briefly, two preliminary considerations. One is that in pursuing any investigation into the life of Christ we are moving on firm ground historically. It is not too much to say that the battle of the documents, drawn out over many years, has by now been fought to what is, from the Christian point of view, a victorious conclusion. Whatever differences there may be as to the interpretation of the facts, there is now pretty general agreement as to the substantial accuracy of the facts themselves of the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.

The other consideration is perhaps even more important. The truth and the value of the idea in this chapter, and underlying much in this book, depend absolutely on the certainty that—whatever be the ultimate explanation of

His person—Jesus was quite genuinely and really *man*.¹ Unless He was really a man, then between Him and us men there yawns an impassable gulf, and it is using language that has no meaning to speak of Him as “our example.” The very word example implies the possibility of a copy or copies, with some kind of relationship or possible resemblance between that which copies and that which is copied. The point is worth stressing because for so long Christian theology rendered little more than lip service to the truth of our Lord’s humanity. And perhaps the greatest gain of the religious thinking of the past twenty-five years has been the recovery of a full belief that Jesus Christ was a real man. We are emerging from that unfortunate dualism which could only see humanity and divinity in antithesis, and which therefore made of Jesus a kind of hybrid, thinking, speaking, acting, now in the *rôle* of God and now in the *rôle* of man. However much of mystery there still remains, and must remain, about His Person, it is at least clear that He had a single consciousness and a single personality : a consciousness, a personality which (so we, His followers, are driven to conclude) is full to the brim of God Himself, *expressing* God so far as God can be expressed through a single human personality at a given time and on the scene of human history. I do not attempt, at this point, to follow up this particular topic, because it would take us far from the theme of this chapter. I only mention it as the indispensable background of any thinking on “Christ our example.” If, without attempting to answer more ultimate questions about His person, we can at least be sure that His mind worked in the same kind of way in which our minds work, that there is a *real* sense in which we may speak of Him as believing, and hoping, and

¹ If He is less than God Incarnate the argument of this essay has no firm basis.

trying, and suffering, and conquering temptation, then we shall approach the study of what He was with a freedom and a zest and an expectancy which would otherwise be wanting.

Now the real value of any biography depends upon the degree in which the biographer can penetrate and disclose the inner springs of the life whose story he is writing. That life may be full of incident and stirring adventure; the tale of it may reveal a man or a woman with capacities and virtues which compel admiration; but the story as a whole will not grip in convincing fashion unless writer and readers can somehow get behind the deeds and the virtues to the man himself, and see him not just as a finished product but in process of becoming. So it is with the story of the earthly life of Jesus. Our first impression, as we read it, is a great surprise and reverence for the characteristics of the personality portrayed, characteristics which so markedly outstrip those of the best men we have ever met—His courage, His selflessness, His love, His insight, His humility, and so forth. Then, as our study continues, we begin to realise that the man Himself is greater than all these characteristics, and that we cannot get at the secret of His life by studying His virtues one by one. We have to go deeper than that. And as we get below the surface of the story we begin to see that His virtues are really the vehicles for a certain spiritual quality. We find that the most arresting thing about Him is the spiritual climate in which He lived, the sort of ultimate attitude of soul, the quality of spirit, which made not only possible but inevitable the words which He spoke and the things which He did. When Jairus' servants met Him with the news that the little girl was dead and that therefore it was useless for Him to go any further, what strikes one is less the bare record of what

He proceeded to do, amazing though that is, than the implied state of His own mind—the utter buoyant certainty that death itself was conquerable and would be conquered. When He brought to the paralytic the boon of a healed body and a cleansed soul, the noteworthy thing is not so much what happened to the paralytic—whom, after all, a lesser man might have healed, and of whose forgiveness there was no sure proof to the onlookers—as the indication of the triumphant freedom with which Jesus seemed to move alike in the material and in the spiritual world. There opens up, indeed, a line of enquiry of the greatest fruitfulness when the Christian disciple sets himself, with reverent humility, to study the “inner life” of the Master.

The first big question one asks, when seeking to understand the secret of the life of any good man, is, What does God mean to him? Stonewall Jackson, whose coolness in battle was the marvel of his fellow soldiers, has left on record the nature of the source of his courage. “Captain,” he said to a comrade who asked him about it, “my religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time for my death. I do not concern myself about that, but to be always ready, no matter when it may overtake me.”¹ Elizabeth Fry, the great pioneer in social righteousness and prison reform, was impelled towards her life work when still quite a girl by a vivid personal discovery of the reality of God. Handley Moule, saint, scholar, bishop, whose life and words and writings have influenced for good uncounted multitudes, was normally to be found at or about 6.30 a.m. every morning walking in his garden with his God. Such instances—and they might be multiplied indefinitely—give us some idea of the potentialities of human life when

¹ *Stonewall Jackson*, by Lt.-Col. Henderson, I. p. 163.

much of man's natural weakness is overcome and God is allowed a dominating place. To Jesus, God was everything. For Him, in every circumstance, God came first; not as one of the factors in the situation, but as the supreme factor which determined the nature of every thought, every motive, every decision, every relationship. Any serious attempt to appreciate the inner life of Jesus makes it clear that He lived in unbroken harmony, in unclouded communion, with God: that the one thing He really cared about—and that always sanely, without any fanatical loss of balance—was to know and to do the Will of God. The thing comes out so clearly, and so frequently that it makes quotation difficult. His earliest recorded words, as a boy of twelve—"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"—are a hint of the spiritual climate in which already He was living. And the answer to His disciples when they found Him sitting on the well parapet tired out—"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me"—is typical of the inner attitude which, all His life, governed what He did. It is noteworthy too that this God-consciousness seems so natural and unforced; it is evidently as natural to Him to think of God, to delight in God, as for a lover to rejoice perpetually in the imagined presence of his beloved. He seems genuinely surprised at the way in which other people forget about God and continually leave Him out of their reckoning.

A further and deeper analysis of the content of Jesus' experience of God would be a large task, indeed the largest that theology can ever attempt. Suffice it to set down here three things which seem to emerge with some plainness. First, Jesus' own word to describe what God is to Him, and is also to all men if only they would see it, is "Father." Not monarch, or judge; not, as our jargon would phrase it, Infinite or Absolute; but just

Father. This Father-God, says Jesus, is interested in small things as well as big things: He loves the flowers, He knows the birds, He is interested, really interested, in men—and not men in the mass, but particular persons, individual men and women and children. Jesus is always trying to make men understand that God does really care about them, and longs to be treated by them as Father.¹ He does not argue this: He states it, as self-evidently true, and as being an account of what in His own experience He knows God to be—and the least orthodox would hesitate to suggest that Jesus is astray in His thinking about God. This certainty of God as Father is the breath of life to Him. “We clamber up to God,” someone has pointed out, “whereas Jesus starts with God as an immediate intuition.” Seeing that God meant this to Him, it is not surprising to find the Gospels recording how much of His time, by day and by night, was spent in solitary, intimate companionship with His Father.

Secondly, this belief of His in the Father-God, sanguine though it was, was real *belief*. It was not (as we should say) intellectual certainty. It was not guaranteed to Him by a sign in the sky, or by the assurances of other people. It was original, like all the rest of His religion: and it was *faith*, faith in our sense of the word, as “that which steps forth into the seeming void and finds the solid rock beneath.” Nor did it come to Him, so to say, complete or ready-made. He had to win it, stage by stage, and He had to hold it, in the face of unbelieving men and of blackest circumstance. Much of the material for His thought of God and His faith in God He no doubt dug out of the mine of the Old Testament Scriptures, and

¹ Cp. passages in Matt. v., vi., Luke xii., and many elsewhere in the Gospels.

transmuted it in the furnace of clear thinking and sheer hard daily duty-doing. From boyhood onwards perhaps the thought grew within Him—I put it perforce in the crudest language—"God is this, and this, and this: and men have never yet found Him to be so, or treated Him so. Can it be that I and none other am called to make the first venture?"

Such moral and spiritual growth is quite consistent with the flawlessness of His character. Perfection is always compatible with growth. A rosebud and a rose can both be perfect, but each has the perfection that belongs to its own stage of development. We must not water down the meaning of those most significant statements. "He learnt obedience through the things that He suffered," and "He was in all points tempted like as we are."¹ It was real learning, and real suffering, and real temptation. No doubt the spiritual battles were fought out on a far higher level than ours, but each battle, each great spiritual crisis (such as was, seemingly, His baptism and "transfiguration") left Him with even clearer vision and stronger resolution. We may dare to think that His Father-God meant even more to Him as He knelt among the cypresses in Gethsemane than He did when three years before He had first begun to speak of God to men by the shores of Galilee's lake.

A third distinctive feature in His faith, though really inherent in his filial consciousness, may for the sake of clearness be noted separately. His faith in God as Father meant not merely a pictured attitude on God's part, an attitude more or less passive; in knowing God as Father He believed, with all the certainty of deep moral conviction, that God's love was ever in active operation towards the sons of men, and would be a thousandfold

¹ Hebrews v. 8; iv. 15.

more active still if only men's faith would give that love freer course. He was prepared to stake everything, and did in the end stake life itself, on the certainty that God wills good for all men: that men have only to turn to Him in childlike faith and ask and claim and demand, and God is more than willing to pour out on them all they need for their whole life, physical and spiritual, out of the fathomless abundance of His divine resources. All this conception of God's effective, available, intervening love was for Jesus something very much more than supposition and patient hope: He was constantly putting His faith to the severest tests of asking God to *do things*. He pressed on beyond that mental state of evasive vagueness in which most religious people take refuge when they are facing the question whether or no they can count upon God to act in some immediate and concrete need. Jesus never relaxed His grip on that crucial question, He always pursued it to an issue, and His faith was invariably justified. This is not to say that His faith was effortless. To win such faith He paid the price of selfless harmony with God, of utter obedience and complete consecration. But the result was a faith which could remove mountains. Once he saw clearly that a certain course of action, or a certain needed benefit, was really good, that is, was completely in line with what His Father willed, He did not stay to consider whether or no it was, as we should say, possible (that is, "intelligibly attested by previous experience"), but straight away made His claim upon God and *God responded*. Thus it was when the storm was stilled, the leper was cleansed, the loaves were multiplied, the dead child was raised to life again. It is (as I venture to think) perhaps the most convincing of the suggested explanations of our Lord's "miracles" to regard them as achieved by His absolute "faith" in God, such faith in

or harmony with the mind of God involving a similar understanding of and harmony with the processes of God's universe.

We have been trying thus far, in our attempt to grasp something of Jesus' inner quality of life, to understand a little what He meant when He used the word God. In order to complete the picture, we must seek also to understand something of what He felt about His fellow-men. Here again we must, if we are honest, admit that it is difficult for us in any adequate way to appraise what He felt towards other people. It is as if a man who can hardly recognise the tune of "God Save the King" should be asked to appreciate a fugue of Bach's. We fall back perforce on the hard-worked word "love." But how little we know of love! For us it covers anything from soft good nature to guilty passion. And, in the Church, we have professionalised it and watered it down, very often, till it stands for little more than the religious affinities of mild people. Let us make the effort, however, to think of love as we know it at its very best and highest: the tender, protecting love of a mother for her child, the wise and understanding love of a father for his grown-up son, the happy, easy, taken-for-granted love of brothers and sisters, the rich comradeship of friends, the glorious, selfless, if need be forgiving, love of man and woman, the redeeming love of him who goes to spend his life with and for the outcasts and the poor—take all this, and blend it and see it filling the heart of, and ever pouring forth from, a single human personality, and then we shall perhaps realise something of the way in which Jesus regarded His fellow-men. I do not suppose it came easily—could anyone easily feel love for a prostitute or a hard-faced tax-gatherer? Doubtless He won it, as He won His faith in God. Indeed, and of course, the two things were inseparable in His mind and

life. What He felt about God naturally and inevitably determined what He felt about men, for He always saw them in God. And He learnt to love them in the same sort of way that He knew His Father loved them. And this was His attitude towards all men without exception : to the men of all time, and to the ends of the earth, His hands stretched out in compassion and longing. All this meant, surely, something very much more than a consciousness of identification with the mass of humanity on the part of the Son of Man. It meant a love which, like all true love, human or divine, settled on individuals. He entered into natural, affectionate, happy relationships with men and women and children whom He got to know in Galilee and in Judæa, and loved them into the Kingdom of God. And—another characteristic of all true love—He believed in them, because He knew God believed in them. He always believes in men. And when men realise that, they find they have to respond.

Yet, and perhaps this is the greatest thing about Him, He went on loving them even when they thought Him a fool or a madman ; yes, even when they betrayed Him and spat on Him and crucified Him. He could not and would not regard them as other than His Father’s children and His own brothers, even when they hated Him and cursed Him. His “ Cross ” must have begun many years before Calvary was in sight. What torture to a sensitive soul to know God as He knew Him, to love men as He loved them, to “ see ” into reality as He saw, and then to find Himself perpetually among those who could not see or would not see, who apparently did not want God and had no use at all for His Kingdom. What grievous pain to realise as He realised the boundless resources of the Father’s love, and yet, through the blindness and the unfaith of ordinary people, to be unable,

save here and there, to use those resources to heal the hideous sin and suffering that seemed to make the world the devil's world. And the climax was reached when the nation as a whole said, in effect, that they had had enough of Him and nailed Him to the Cross. It was love, love going all lengths, that welcomed their worst. Perhaps it was the consciousness of rejected love which, literally, broke His heart. Yet even in the midst of the darkness surely there still glimmered deep within Him the faith that the Father's love, when men saw in this Cross what it meant and what it cost, would one day reach the heart of a penitent world.

As I read over again what has been set down thus far, I am conscious once more—what writer on such a theme could fail to be?—of the hopelessness of the task of describing Jesus Christ. Just as men can only see God in Christ, so they can only see Christ when they see a human life animated and dominated by His Spirit; a paper account of Him can convey so terribly little of what He was and is. His courage, His poise, His originality, His extraordinary insight and sympathy, His happiness and gaiety and joy (the antithesis of Swinburne's "pale Galilæan"!)—there are a thousand touches which any complete picture would need; and yet even if they should be added the picture, any mere pen picture, would remain colourless and unconvincing. No one can really know Christ until he sees Him in wife or husband, in comrade or friend, in prophet or priest; and even then his knowledge will remain remote and second-hand until he is willing to throw in his lot with Him and venture forth by His side against the common enemy.

Yet, despite the obvious and inherent difficulty of the task, it is nevertheless worth attempting from time to time. If, after all, there is any right and ultimate place

for religious literature among civilised people, a considerable proportion of that literature will always and inevitably centre round the main facts of the earthly life of Jesus Christ. And a volume planned on such lines as the present one would be seriously incomplete if those facts were left out or slurred over.

There is one thing that remains to be said in bringing the argument of this essay to a close. It is that Jesus Christ evidently entertained a deep-rooted conviction that what He felt about God and about man should be and could be the normal way of thinking for ordinary men. He was unique but not isolated; original but not—dare I use the word?—a freak, a phenomenon unrelated to the rest of human kind. He evidently saw no reason in the nature of things why men should not escape from their mental prison house into the free air and glorious sunlight of the love of God and love of man in which He Himself habitually lived. And so He set out on the task of helping men to share His certainty of God. We are probably somewhere near the truth if we picture thus His own thought about His mission. He set himself the task of getting men to change their minds about God and themselves and the world. He would have them trust God and treat God as He really is, as *Father*, and not as the remote and unreal and unlovely being of their misguided imaginings. And He would have them view one another and treat one another in a way that befits members of the great family of a Father-God. And He knew they could; He knew there is that in the soul of man which will always respond to truth and goodness and beauty when once he can become aware of those ultimate realities. So His proposed Kingdom of Love, transforming all human relationships and transfiguring all human activities, was no forlorn hope, or Utopian musing; it was, and still

is, the most practicable and feasible mode ever proposed for changing the world as it is into the world as it might be and ought to be. Some, at least, then and afterwards, "saw" and responded; and, themselves "converted," they at once set about the task of converting their world. That so much still remains unconverted is man's fault, not God's. The Kingdom is still "at hand," and God still waits for man's faith to unloose the pent-up flood of His love.

Let the point of all this, in a few concluding sentences, be made unmistakably clear. If Jesus did really expect men to come to share His point of view, and if, in point of fact, some men, both during His earthly life and since, have come so close to Him that they have in a real measure been able to enter into His mind about God and man, then there is imported a rich and wonderful meaning into the phrase at the head of this chapter, "Christ our Example." That phrase ceases to be, what many phrases heard in Church actually are, touched with unreality. It is just sheer truth to say that there is no reason in the nature of things why the writer and the readers of these lines, and any other quite ordinary people, should not be "made like unto Him," Jesus. Provided, of course, that the one condition be fulfilled, that of humble, continued, conscious personal contact between Him and us.¹

It is not hyperbole, but the statement of plain fact, to speak of intimate companionship with a present Christ. Men sometimes complain, and not without reason, of the Church's lack of "power," of the preponderance of big talk over effective action. The cause of that weakness is not far to seek. It lies in the large number of "Christians" whose religion is almost entirely second-hand, and who know next to nothing of a day-by-day friendship with

¹ Cp. Essay XII.

God. All the best qualities of humanity—and many of the worst too—are infectious. Cowardly men become brave in the company of a brave friend. Christ can and does actually give Himself to, share His mind with, put His Spirit into, those men and women who deliberately seek His influence. And when that contact is established, as life's normal experience, then and there is Christ incarnated in human lives. Then and there is a Christianity which is powerful, effective, demonstrating in the changed, transfigured lives of men and women the principles and the methods by which the whole world itself shall be transformed into the Kingdom of God. There is no possible doubt that “power” of this kind is available for all, and not just for the intellectually and spiritually *élite*. Anyone who genuinely desires to do the will of God and follow the example of Christ will never lack the spiritual and moral ability for such a course of action.

I am not unmindful of various large questions which arise, and would have to be faced; such as the real ethical problems involved in the attempt to interpret and apply the principles of Jesus to the individual and social life of our day. But I am persuaded that such questions will never be solved until men believe wholeheartedly that it is possible to follow the way of Jesus, that the actual presence now and here of the living Jesus makes it possible, and that the only way to prove it is to cut the painter and push off with Him over uncharted seas of moral adventure. To do that is to taste something of “the glorious liberty of the sons of God.”

E. S. WOODS.

VII

WITNESS AND SERVICE

It is proverbial that as a race we are most reserved and inarticulate about the subjects which touch us most deeply. When a man waves a flag in a school chapel while appealing to patriotic motives for generosity, he sets up immediately an atmosphere of inner hostility to his pleading. The married man on holiday who should try to impress too frequently upon a climbing party the virtues and charms of his absent wife, would be quietly but deservedly dropped from the party in the following year.

Now the instinctive fear of falling under a similar condemnation has had a paralysing effect upon thousands of British Christians, making them miss half the joy of their religion, the joy of personal witness to Christ. We have only to turn to the New Testament to find that the sense of Christ's power to change doubt into faith, the enjoyment of His forgiveness and friendship, the acceptance of His challenging ideals for individual life and for society at large, were benefits which a man could not help wishing to convey to others.

The example of St. Andrew, "first finding his own brother Simon"; the story of the woman of Samaria, hurrying back empty-handed from the well to the villagers of Sychar; the picture of St. Paul heartening his fellow-passengers, huddled in panic on the deck of a sinking Alexandrian transport—these are but types of a religious experience which made it seem the most natural thing in

the world to speak about Christ to others, once He had become real to the soul of a man or a woman.

Some may reply that in the first rapture of Christian experience, when Christ's coming to a world grown lonely and disillusioned was like the springtime of love in the life of a man, it was inevitable that the natural reserves and restraints of speech should be forgotten, as a lover sometimes forgets them when describing his new experience to his friends. Ever since Christianity gradually took its place among the recognised religions of the world its advocacy has very properly been handed over to trained and accredited evangelists. The ordinary layman, indeed, must be ready to support them by his purse and by his example, but not by word of mouth; for all sensible men keep their religion to themselves. Decent reserve on that subject, above all others, rests on an instinct too sure, too sound to be violated.

Such a point of view has become strongly entrenched in our own day and generation. But this book will entirely miss the mark, unless it meets and modifies that attitude of mind. The previous writers have called men to share in a personal experience of God richly made known in Christ—an experience which may become a source of joy and power and purpose in daily living.

But is the experience to stop there? If it does, it will fall far short of that New Testament ideal of Christianity to which these essays continually look as their inspiration, an ideal the recovery of which is the sorest need of the modern world.

The *motif* of the whole New Testament is the making known of a new and glorious Evangel. How rich that Good News is the other essayists seek to show, presenting it from many angles. But each presentation is also a challenge, summoning us to pass on the message. God's suffering love and creative Fatherhood, for example, will

fail of their purpose for our own lives unless and until we too become sharers in His undying "quest," creators, with Him, of new life in others, as we help them to become free from the cramping bondage of sin. Conversion is not merely a turning away from a dead past, but a turning towards a life of service for others, with the indwelling Christ as our fascinating ideal and our inspiring motive. If we have truly been converted, we shall instinctively seek to win men and women to Christ and to His Church by our example and influence and prayer, not as to a stereotyped institution, but a living fellowship in Him which is committed to a world-wide campaign of social and international service. For the sake of "a brother for whom Christ died" we shall be willing to forgo the lawful but inexpedient pleasure, or equally willing to be mistaken for gluttonous men and winebibbers. And it is because we can draw our inspiration for "witness and service" towards others only from the high unfailing springs of God's own life that we shall give ourselves constantly to prayer and sacrament and meditation on His Word.

Such a philosophy, when set beside the New Testament, will ring true. Above all, it is in harmony with the example and teaching of our Lord. All through His earthly life He was the great Fisher of Men. And before Him stood the Cross as the magnet whereby, in the coming years, He should "draw all men" unto Him. But because He loved men so generously, because He saw the rich possibilities of each human soul, He judged each individual by the acid test of character; the man after His heart is "he that heareth My words and doeth them." Where men failed to pass His test, He insisted that they must "be converted," or they could not even enter His Kingdom. Evangelical religion has been the

salt of the earth largely because of its insistence on personal conversion, which is an echo of Christ's own emphasis on character as the supreme test—character attained not by weary striving, but by a change of heart towards God and towards men which issues instinctively in a new way of life.

And surely Christ laid this emphasis on individual character because He knew that personality is a diffusive force. We cannot help witnessing for good or for evil. Every atom in the mass affects the position of the rest, however slightly. Every life may be the seedplot either of a wholesome harvest or of noxious weeds. The solidarity of humanity therefore becomes one of the greatest arguments for making as many people as possible into Christians who shall tell, and tell heavily, for God and for good, wherever and whatever their life may be. Sometimes this motive has been overlooked by Evangelicals in their excessive zeal for the saving of separate individuals, and their work has suffered accordingly. For it is not enough to turn a soul to God : the life towards men, the life of service and love, must be trained with care and patience. But in all ages Evangelicals have clung tenaciously to the word of Christ : " Ye must be born again." They have caught His spirit, joined in His everlasting quest, and gone out boldly to win others by their witness and prayer to a share in the new life which Christ has given to them. The centuries are bright with such names, for example, as those of St. Paul and Raymond Lull and Wesley, which are set in the centre of great movements of personal evangelism that have left their mark on Christian history for all time.

But our inspiration to-day may come from a challenge even more recent than that which these names suggest. The Evangelical movement in the nineteenth century cut

clean through the deep-rooted reserves and restraints of the British temperament, and sent men out to testify boldly to others of the Christ who had made life new for themselves. Among them were leaders in social reform at home, like Lord Shaftesbury; members of the aristocracy, like Lord Radstock or the courtly Sir Arthur Blackwood, or of the professional classes, like the solicitor Radcliffe of Liverpool; or men who gave themselves to the cause of missionary service abroad, like the famous "Cambridge Seven" and Ian Keith Falconer of Harrow and Cambridge, the amateur bicycle champion and brilliant orientalist. All these made no secret of their desire to win others to Christ by their words as well as by their lives.

Now it may be argued that the times have changed and that these men had advantages which are denied to the modern Evangelical layman. For them, it will be said, truth was simpler and more compact; modern astronomy had not yet disclosed the undreamed-of vastness of our universe; anthropology and geology had not pushed back the origin of human life on this earth by a million or more years; the new psychology, with its researches into the intricate labyrinths of human consciousness, had not yet correlated spiritual experience to primitive instincts and rational processes. Moreover, it will be said, the Christianity of these nineteenth-century Evangelicals was clear-cut and definite: it could be tabulated by well-known formulæ—"Conversion, Sanctification, Consecration," and the like. True, it summoned men apparently to a harder choice and a more complete severance from "worldly" ties than is generally demanded to-day: the ballroom, cards, the theatre, usually wine, perhaps also smoking—all these must go. At least the rules of the game were clearer though the pace was hotter, and the

prize seemed more glorious when a friend or a neighbour at last gave in and became a Christian on your own terms. And having won him, what a magnificent work could be laid before him ! The Church had her great enterprises afoot—at home, social reforms like the prohibition of child labour ; abroad, the abolition of the slave trade ; and, above all, a missionary adventure in its dawn, an adventure full of thrills and dangers, in undiscovered Africa and hostile China, in a romantic but friendly India, or a half-awakened Japan.

Yes, it was easy (the argument will continue) to witness to Christ then, when once the ingrained attitude of decent and instinctive reserve had been abandoned. To-day, the Christian layman must play for safety. “ After all, good form matters more than religious fervour ; good form is religion, in fact, and it has its own rules, which must be kept at all costs. Let parsons do the best they can with the winning of new adherents to the Church. It is a pity that they are not better at their job, many of them. But then how can a businesslike man encourage or even permit his son (educated at nobody knows what cost in a public school) to become ordained to a profession (*sic*) not even decently paid . . . ? ”

It is easy to be sarcastic at the expense of laymen facing difficulties from which a parson's vocation protects him. And it would not be fair to minimise the very genuine obstacles confronting the layman who, perhaps, has found in the previous essays of this book, a call and a challenge which have set him on the pathway to so rich an experience of Christ that already a desire to share it somehow with others is being born within him. But the time is surely ripe for a new “ call to witness.” It will not be sounded in exactly the same terms or tones as those of any previous age, though “ the love of Christ

constraineth us " will always be its keynote. It will not, however, be any the less real; nor any easier to answer. In any generation it takes not only a wise man and a Christlike, but a brave man, to win the soul of another for Christ by personal witness.

As we face that challenge, we shall do well to lift our vision to the wider horizons of the Church, from which we may gain both guidance and encouragement as we face anew the task of winning others to Christ. For it is in the modern mission field that we shall most unmistakably recognise, in our day and generation, a spirit of witness which will remind us of the joyous and adventurous campaign of Christ and the early Christians, and of the great leaders in Evangelism down the ages. It is hard, indeed, to make a selection, when the pages of missionary books and magazines are crowded with records which put us to very shame for the lukewarmness of our desire to make Christ known to others. Two examples must suffice.

Sadhu Sundar Singh, one of the most picturesque and appealing personalities of the East, goes climbing each summer into the mountain ranges of Thibet; a splendid pioneer in personal evangelism for Christ, among a people at whose hands he firmly expects to meet at last a martyr's end. When the Sadhu comes to Great Britain, as he sometimes does, the almost pathetic earnestness with which men receive his message and admire his simplicity is a sufficient sign, surely, that there exists, deep down in their hearts, a longing for real religion in personal life. The hubbub and clatter and vulgarity of much of our modern civilisation make men envious of the quiet, deep-flowing religious experience for which the Sadhu stands. He is one of those " whose lips are in their lives." ¹

¹ Ralph Hodgson, *The Song of Honour*.

The other example is Kagawa of Japan, who is at once a brilliant novelist, poet, newspaper-editor, labour leader and social reformer. By his work in the worst slums of Kobe (the Liverpool of modern Japan), and by his fearless claim that Christ alone can solve Japan's social problems by teaching men "the fine art" of living the gospel, he is offering to us of the West a shining example of personal evangelism. For in all his teaching and living, Kagawa lays supreme emphasis on the need for saving human society from its diseases and dangers by winning individual men to share in the saving grace of Jesus Christ. "Souls must be redeemed first: we cannot redeem ourselves," is his watchword.

To win others to Christ is the only way by which we may ourselves set about the ultimate redemption of human society. "It is people that count: you want to put yourself into people; they touch other people; these, others still, and so you go on working for ever."¹

Let us now suppose that a Christian layman, while reading his New Testament through with an open mind as a new book, has seen how thin and unworthy is "British reserve" as an excuse for failure in Christian discipleship; that a re-discovery of Christ, as presented to him in the language of our own generation, has filled him with a desire to share his discovery with others; and that he has become convinced that the shortest and safest, though perhaps the steepest, pathway to the realisation of Christ's Kingdom on earth is the winning of other men to the personal following of Jesus. Where and how is he to begin? Surely, among his own friends. It is in the natural and ordinary intercourse of daily life that his witness will tell most effectively. Let him first pray that God the Holy Spirit may lay upon him

¹ Alice Freeman Palmer.

clearly and unmistakably "the burden of the souls of men," to use the challenging phrase of a bygone generation. Then let him cultivate every opportunity of closer friendship with others, share their interests, study their personalities. If the essays in this book have succeeded in their aim, they will have combined to show what it is to be a Christian, and from them a man may learn wherein his friend whom he seeks to win has not yet entered into the full experience of Christ. But his attitude as a "soul-winner" must be utterly free from any superiority or patronage. After all, he is not seeking so much to reveal a Christ whom he perfectly knows himself, as to release the life of Christ pent up in a friend, that he himself may learn afresh of Him through that friend's life. He may not be glib in his expression of the scheme of salvation: his standard of "worldliness" may differ from that laid down on page 118. But he will not rest until his friend knows Christ as Saviour, Friend, and Lord of all good life.

Above all, he will keep his purpose high and his methods wholesome, if he constantly reminds himself that it is for a joint crusade of Christian living that he will enlist the other man when he has come to know Christ. If they are in the same business—an office, a school, a workshop—it will be with the aim of turning that microcosm, or "small world," into a Christian world that he gives himself to the winning to Christ of the friend whose part is so vital to the whole. Not that our friends are merely means to an end, or pawns in a game. They are glorious ends in themselves to God who made them for Himself. But as their environment is part of their life, so it must play a real part in the process of turning their life Godward.

There are some Christian laymen who ought to be on the Town Council of their borough, that they may make it Christian by winning its members to share in a Christian

ideal for its work. There are Christian women and girls who ought to be throwing themselves wholeheartedly into the Girl Guide Movement, that by showing to their fellow Guides the "fine art" of Christian living in a Guide Company, they may bring them to Christ. There are thousands of us who, if we began to regard our home or our office or our schoolroom, our regiment or our shop or our shipyard, as a small world to be revolutionised for Christ by our personal example or influence, would have enough scope of Christian witness and service to occupy us through every hour of the day. We may sometimes seem to touch another soul for a moment only, or for a day, or for a year. But in such contact, if it is made in dependence on the Holy Spirit, there may be forged all unknown to ourselves a link in a long chain of spiritual experience which, at the end, will draw that soul to Christ.

If we could see in this light each day's life and each day's intercourse with others we should sometimes go to our beds with a sense of deep failure; for it is hard to live like Jesus always, even in a carpenter's shop. But our very sense of failure would keep us from the complacent self-righteousness and respectability to which, as a dead level, our religion so easily sinks. And sometimes we shall have the reward of our witness, as Christ gives us openings for telling others a little of what He means to ourselves. This at least is certain; that when we regard them not merely as "souls to be saved" but as invaluable workers, indispensable to His cause, they will offer less resistance to our influence.

That influence will need to be begun, continued, and ended in our private prayer life for them behind the outward scene. That is how Jesus won his "workers for the great employ." Can we hope to succeed by any other

plan? This was the secret which lay behind the marvellous influence of Forbes Robinson, the Cambridge don, that past-master in personal evangelism, whose *Letters to his Friends* are the classic exposition of the art. "If we want to look at men from the inside," he says, "I know only one way—the old, old way which God Himself adopts. We must love them, love the Christ, the spirit in them."¹ "We shall not have to talk so much to others if we pray for them. We talk and we don't influence, or we influence only for a time, because our lives are not more prayer-full."² And again, "Only pray for individuals—for a long time together. To influence you must love; to love, you must pray."³ "What a joy it is when one character in which we are interested, for which we have prayed and wrestled in prayer, shows slight but sure signs of a healthy development! . . . God does not let us see many results, but He lets us see just enough to help us to go forward."⁴

But there is a danger in personal evangelism against which a word of warning must now be said. The "small world" immediately surrounding us may prove to be our prison-house, unless we keep that, too, in its proper setting, and regard it as part of a wider whole. We seek to Christianise our individual friend, and call him to help us to Christianise that part of the body politic in which we live together, that we may climb our little hill step by step and side by side. But our eyes must meanwhile be fixed upon the Everest that lies beyond, "*the transformation of human society by making all men Christian.*"⁵ That splendid ideal of which

¹ *Letters to his friends*, p. 61 (Spottiswoode).

² *Ibid.*, p. 95.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁵ Extract from a *Times* leading article on "Copec," April 14th, 1924.

"Copec" dreamed, and dreams still, is the aim which the Christian Church sets before itself in its world-wide missionary enterprise.

Half the lukewarmness towards foreign missions that exists in the Church to-day comes from the indifference of Christians who do not know their Christ, and therefore have no care for those who still live without the full experience of Him. And the other half comes from the ignorance of Christians who do not know their world, and therefore cannot conceive how unfair it is to try to evangelise Liverpool and yet leave Nigeria pagan, while Liverpool is enriched by Nigerian commerce; how impossible it is to arrive at a true League of Nations without trying to create a Christian China and Japan; how futile it is to grumble at the demands of Indian Swarajists unless we are prepared to give India not merely the secular education which creates ambitions that it cannot justly satisfy, but the Christian education which alone can produce Christian leaders for a Christian democracy within a British Commonwealth of nations.

It was to convert men to Christ that Dr. Howard Somervell went back to India as a Medical Missionary; his splendid failure in the Everest expedition of 1924 was an episode for which he was allowed a special furlough. It was to convert men to Christ that the two missionary schoolmasters, through whom Sundar Singh and Kagawa found Christ as boys, turned their schools into "a small world" to be won for Him. They were not content to preach to the "heathen in our midst," for they believed of the Gospel that "the lever which is not long enough to reach across the world is not strong enough to lift men's lives at home." Some of us will need to form the other end of that lever in person, if we are honest

with ourselves and with Christ. And, if we cannot go abroad, at least we can help to keep our representatives there.

As we watch them at work, we shall see the quiet, steady "transformation of human society" taking place before our very eyes, in a hundred directions. Amid the chaos of modern China the Chinese Church stands firm, and trains its leaders for the better days ahead. The backward child races of Africa, fast growing to national manhood, owe to Christian missions their first steps in education. The Christians of Japan in their valley of suffering, look up to find hope, and healing, and courage in the ever-suffering but ever-triumphant Son of Man. India reveres Gandhi; and Gandhi with all his errors has made India see something, at least, of the Christ Whose portrait always hangs above his desk.¹

We shall never make Christians at home who will have the courage to join us in the transformation of our own small society here, unless we bring to them the greater vision of a world-wide Redeemer, whose purpose is still the saving transformation of all men everywhere. But from the vision of such a Christ we shall win, for our task of home evangelism, both a new power and a new fascination.² The Christian master in a public school who is trying to help sixth-form boys to a reasonable faith in Christ, may do it by interpreting to them the living romance of Sadhu Sundar Singh, as presented, for example, in the masterly study of his life by Streeter and Appasamy. The record of modern Christian martyrdoms in Russia, or of the persecution of Christian outcasts in N. India,

¹ Cp. *The Gospel and the World*, by A. C. Fraser (Anglican Evangelical Group Movement Pamphlets, Hodder & Stoughton).

² Cp. article on this subject, "Modern Moneychangers of the Gospel," *International Review of Missions*, Jan. 1924.

will strengthen the hand of the factory girl who is asking a friend to join her in living a life in the factory which will expose them both to derision until they, too, win a victory by Christlike love. The layman too timid to make any other beginning with his friend at the office lends him Dr. Albert Schweitzer's romantic but modest tale of a heroic Christian crusade in Africa, *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest*, and prays that his friend may win from it a new vision of Christ. The mother of a spirited girl, who seems to live only for tennis and dancing, will not read to her negative homilies, but lend her Mrs. Starr's thrilling *Tales of Tirah and Lesser Thibet* with their challenge of fine Christian adventure. The man or woman leading a difficult club in a slum settlement, who is tempted to abandon material so unpromising and a task so hopeless, comes across *Character-Building in Kashmir*, by Tyndale-Biscoe of the C.M.S., and in that marvellous record of "making men out of jellyfish" finds courage for a new beginning, because Christ never despairs of anyone.

So witness and service, at home and abroad, conspire together to the creating of new lives here and a new world everywhere. We bear witness, and God gives us souls for our hire; thus we win new encouragement for the campaign.

We live to serve others; and serving, find our lives increasingly possessed by a purpose which gives rich meaning to every hour of the day. And, at length, we shall leave behind us the only bequest to the world whose bounty can never be measured—men and women, boys and girls, won to Christ by our influence here at home; and lives in India or Africa, China or Japan, won to Him in our name and through our gifts and prayers. These are the children of our spiritual fatherhood; and, when

we pass hence, they will carry on our little work in ever-growing circles, which shall have Christ as their only centre, and world-wide humanity as their only boundary.

R. W. HOWARD.

VIII

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF LIFE

It is reasonable to suppose that there is discoverable a Christian view of life which can be held in common by Christian people of different nationalities and temperaments, and which should be traceable in their literature, art and social relationships. All that we can say, however, at the moment is that we are in search of it. It was the business of the "Copec" Conference at Birmingham to endeavour to formulate this view, and to focus it upon the confusion of our present time, in relation to Politics, Economics and Citizenship. The difficulties which its members have encountered in their magnificent undertaking, even within the limits which they prescribed to themselves, is a warning to anyone who endeavours to make any contribution to the subject. To assert that the view is discoverable is a very different thing from asserting that it has been discovered, or that any one person or group of persons is competent to disclose the whole of it. Who shall interpret Christ but Christ Himself or the whole Body, thinking in unison, of which Christ is the Head?

It is a somewhat disappointing confession to make because we should naturally like to think that, just as it is possible to get a clear-cut view, for example, of the Greek view of life, so we can easily and with an equally sure touch describe the Christian view of life. Why should we not have books like *The Greek View of Life* by Lowes Dickinson, or *The Greek Genius and Its Meaning*

to *Us* by R. W. Livingstone, describing with equal clarity and with a similar consensus of opinion the Christian view of life and the genius of Christianity?

The answer surely lies in the Godwardness and Catholicity of Christianity. The Greek view of life concerned the gentleman only. The culture of Athens rested upon slave labour. It was within the strictest limits that humanism flourished. It is easy to describe the life within that charmed circle where wealth, friends, leisure and health were considered essential; and to do full justice at the same time to the Greek sense of beauty, directness, sanity and freedom, without impinging upon those great problems which belief in a loving personal God, the brotherhood of all humanity, the reality of sin, and a life beyond the grave were sure to bring to light. It was not until Plato came with his religious misgivings, and not until the Stoics broke up the gentlemanly view of life, that the Greek outlook became complex and difficult. Henceforth the compactness of that view was gone for ever which saw in the happily placed man a creature with "nature essentially good with a body and soul equally excellent" and which, making this man "the measure of all things, turned to the earth for success or failure and set no store by a world to come."¹

It is evident that Christianity with its other-worldliness and its leavening of this world, with its apparently conflicting ideals of rescuing people from a perishing world and of setting up at the same time the kingdom of heaven on earth, with its mixture of mystical feeling and practical ethics, with its Catholic Church and its individual appeal, cannot easily formulate a compact or tidy view of life. Its history is a constant record of the conflict of the ideal with the practical, of movements half inspired and half true, of compromise and imperfect synthesis. There

¹ Livingstone, *The Greek Genius and Its Meaning to Us*, p. 190.

is no "serenity" about the Christian view of life. It is always in the act of becoming, and has never become. The followers of Jesus have tried gigantic experiments. Once it seemed almost settled that the Christian religion must be interpreted as essentially ascetic, but monasticism in the end proved spiritually sterile. The Church retraced her steps. Once in the dawn of the Renaissance it seemed as if a new Christian humanism might arise and literature and art serve the interests of humanity under the tutelage of the Catholic Church. But literature and art broke fiercely away, refusing to be kept in leading-strings. They sought the same freedom which science had already begun to demand so insistently. The Church began to falter and fumble once more in her attitude towards life. Lost provinces seemed to her like rebel provinces. Ultimate values other than goodness the Church could not understand. She became more and more conscious of a growing antagonism to human interests which organised themselves apart from her. Catholic and Protestant alike began to narrow their view of life. They entrenched themselves. A world in which such a spirit of independence was loose did not seem to be a safe world in which to move about.

This helps to explain the very varying views which have been put forward at different times and by different persons as the authoritative Christian view of life. They have been influenced by the Church's movement to the right or to the left at some particular period of its history. Otherwise it would be difficult to understand the apparent contradictions. Thus Mr. J. A. Symonds in his book on the Renaissance assumes that Christianity is essentially ascetic : ¹

¹ " I cannot read the New Testament, the *Imitatio Christi*, the *Confessions of S. Augustine*, and the *Pilgrim's Progress* without feeling that Christianity in its origin, and as understood by its

Compare this with Mr. Clutton Brock's statement.¹

"The Puritan hated art because for him it could not be Christian, since he himself was not fully Christian. But in the doctrine of Christ, though He never spoke of art, there is implied a harmony between art and philosophy, because there is a harmony between wisdom and passion, because for Him only the passionate life is wise. . . . In the wisdom of Christ there is the warmth of freedom of appetite itself, the richness of ease of nature, for it is a wisdom that refuses no faculty of the human mind and is dismayed by no weakness. Its aim is to transform and not to reject whatever is man."

The only explanation which we can give of views so widely different is that the genius of Christianity transcends both, that it is capable in the Protean forms which it assumes of appearing either humanistic or ascetic, that it will certainly appear either one or the other if it becomes idly ill-proportioned, or if, as may well happen, it concentrates intensively for the time being upon the fulfilment of some particular end as part fulfilment of its final goal. Readjustment comes later with the recovery of the larger vision.

It is not perhaps beside the mark to point out that it is impossible not to philosophise Christianity if it is to help us to reach totality. What really matters is that the historic Christ should be the centre of such philosophy, that it should not be an abstraction made in the interests of an *a priori* theory, but that

chief champions, was and is ascetic. Of this Christianity I therefore speak, not of the philosophised Christianity, which is reasonably regarded with suspicion by the orthodox and uncompromising. It was, moreover, with Christianity of this primitive type that the arts came first into collision."—J. A. Symonds, *The Renaissance in Italy*, p. 18 (footnote).

¹ A. Clutton Brock's *Studies in Christianity*, p. 149.

the whole Christ should genuinely inspire it. It is also necessary to remember what I have ventured to draw attention to in a recent pamphlet,¹ that there are three sound reasons which account for the much narrower and more ascetic view of life which we find in the Epistles than that which we find in the Gospels.

First of all, the early disciples were engaged in direct missionary enterprise. They were concerned with pioneer work. Life is seen from the standpoint of the travelling evangelist hurrying from point to point in his campaign for the Kingdom of God. There is no letter written by an ordinary person living a typical life in an average Christian community. Secondly, the early disciples lived under the expectation of the immediate end of the world. Their social ethic is largely governed by this consideration. The duty of saving souls from a perishing world transcends all other human interests. There is no time to enjoy the world of Nature or of art, no time for table talk or play. The King's business required haste, and the writers of the New Testament gave themselves hastily to it. They would have rejected summarily the appeal which comes home to us so closely :

" What is this life, if full of care
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet how they can dance."

They were like soldiers on active service, for whom all thought of leisure is postponed. Thirdly, it was exceedingly difficult for them, even if they desired to do so, to mix in the social life of their neighbours. Over all the sports and games, the social festivals and public func-

¹ *Recreations and Amusements* (Anglican Evangelical Group Movement Pamphlets : Hodder & Stoughton).

tions, the heathen gods or demons were supposed to preside. The Christian was not free to separate in his mind these activities from their presiding geniuses. Loyalty to Christ compelled him to abstain. He became a Puritan, as many another man has since become, through stress of circumstances.

But it would be unreasonable to define the Christian view of life wholly in terms of the experience of the early Christians. Many factors in their life were not permanent or universal. Some of their beliefs have been modified in the course of time. Their attitude towards life will always stand out clearly as a corrective to pleasure-loving tendencies and as a supreme challenge to concentrate upon a high moral end. But Christianity was only then "mewing its mighty youth." It had not measured itself against the philosophies of the time, or felt itself as a spirit moving within a nation. It had not compassed the life of an individual no longer persecuted or outcast. It had not yet reached the stage when it could express itself through education or social customs. Hence the partial or incomplete note to be found in certain passages from the Epistles.

The study of the Christian view of life must begin with the Person of Christ. Theologians are no doubt divided on the emphasis which the Incarnation is intended to place upon human nature. Some will say that it shows how far gone human nature was from original righteousness, in that it needed such renovation as God thus gave to it; others will point out how akin to God it still must be if the moral perfection of God can be revealed through the human Jesus. It is sufficient for us at this point to see that the possibilities of man's nature, his highest good, the reason why he is in the world, his legitimate interests,

and his future destiny are to be studied in the light of the Incarnation. God, the source of all ultimate values, revealed in the perfection of His moral being and in the activity of His love to us under the name of Father, is manifest in human flesh. Human life for the Christian is not something, however noble, which still stands apart from God. It is to be lived by us as if God under such limitations were living it Himself. This is the meaning of the life of Jesus when we think of it as an example. Jesus shows that ultimate values belong to human life, that human life reaches its highest in pursuit of them, that it is possible to co-ordinate impulses, instincts, interests, all the apparatus of human nature in pursuit of an ultimate value. Such an ultimate value for Him is Love—Love which operates vertically and horizontally, uniting earth and heaven, His Father and His brethren, God and Man. Thus life becomes for Him the activity of Love. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

There is a curious tendency in Christian thought to separate the philosophy of the Incarnation from the philosophy of the Cross. People, for example, who owe much to the writings of H. M. Clow are suspicious of the school of Westcott. The Cross of Calvary is viewed as the corrective of Christian humanism founded upon the Incarnation. The great doctrines of sacrifice, service and redemption are somehow supposed to be superimposed or stamped upon the Incarnation by the Cross. Hence the centrality of the Cross becomes a watchword and the interpretation of life made dependent on it. Herein surely there lies a fallacy. It may be necessary indeed to assert the principle of self-giving which finds

its supreme focus in the Cross over against a slipshod view of the Incarnation which would see in it simply the glorifying of human nature; but the Incarnation itself is an act of self-giving on the part of God, and all that finds its final expression in the Cross is inherent in the self-limitation of God working through a human personality and seeking through love man's highest good. There is no need for diverse schools to group themselves severally round the Incarnation and the Cross. The Incarnation means self-giving to the uttermost, the Cross represents its final impact upon sinful men who can only be released from sinning by coming under the thrall of goodness.

There is indeed a primary lesson to be learnt from this ultimate connection of the Incarnation with the Cross. Self-giving is the law of the Christian life. But whereas it involves much joy and only limited pain for a Christian artist or writer to give himself creatively to the world, when we enter directly upon the moral sphere and seek to give ourselves wholly to others in the activity of redeeming love, illimitable suffering may be ours. This is in part an explanation of such genuine asceticism as is inherent in Christianity, and which has not been foisted upon it by alien views about the unworthiness of the body, or the unspirituality of the marriage state, or the value of suffering for suffering's sake. In this world where we must recognise the presence of moral disorder, however we may explain it, and where the smouldering resentment against the higher demands of goodness, which has come down to us from our brute ancestry, may flare into conflagration at any moment and become a persecuting force, the Christian must be to some extent upon his guard. A perfect joyousness at all times or in all company is not possible to him. There are elements in human nature alien to the spirit of Christ within him.

There are rough world forces which may take him by the throat and choke goodness out of him. He may pay in some form or other the same penalty which supreme goodness suffered upon the Cross.

What remains of Christian asceticism is the natural outcome of self-giving itself. Giving is the opposite of getting. A man, indeed, intent on giving may get in order that he may give more. He may seek, for example, a good education, that his giving may be richer and fuller. He may perhaps with more diffidence but with a good conscience seek money or influence, or even welcome them if they come to him because they increase his power of giving. But giving always involves surrender and the highest form of self-giving involves sacrifice. Herein lies the explanation of legitimate pleasures gladly set aside, of the risk of atrophy of interests courageously faced, and of deliberate concentration which may ignore so much that is beautiful or illuminating in life. The man of science and the man of letters, the explorer, the artist, the inventor, the craftsman, all sorts and conditions of people, know something of these indispensable concomitants of self-giving. The Christian, inasmuch as he is impelled by the strongest of all motives—Love—and exercises his self-giving in the widest of all fields—humanity—is sure to experience these disabilities more acutely. This does not mean that he decries the things which he must leave aside or mortifies his native joyousness. It does not mean that he denies differentiation of function or vocation within the Christian life. Within the sphere to which he believes God has called him he proceeds with his self-giving as a stout believer in the Incarnation and a humble follower of Christ crucified.

It is the creed of the Christian which gives distinctive

colouring to his life. First comes the conviction that God is central in human life. The Greek believed in the organisation of our complex human nature "under the control of a lucid reason," but Christ, to quote the words of Bishop Gore "centres man's life on God. He puts him in full view of God as the goal of life. He bases life on God as a foundation. Again, as a consequence of this, he calculates life—as life lived in God must be calculated—on the scale of eternity." ¹

It is the trick of calculating things on the scale of eternity which so often differentiates the Christian and puzzles his neighbours. Suppose, for example, the subject under discussion is that of success. One man will approach it from the point of view of Lord Beaverbrook, who deals with it quite sensibly in a little book from the point of view of a sound business man working under the present economic order. Another will contribute criticisms of Signor Mussolini and Mr. Lloyd George. A third will want to know how he is to win at golf. In each case, however, the scale on which success is thought of is not very different. It is viewed as something tangible, carrying with it immediate reward in the shape of power or money or a monthly medal. The Christian is not such a prig as to despise this scale of values. He too cares for recognition and enjoys the sense of winning, but he sees it, whether he is a politician or a man of business or a sportsman, exactly for what it is worth. The ultimate scale is the scale of eternity. It is moral values, not herd values, that last. And the Christian, with his strong sense of moral values and his steady practice in calculating life on the basis of the reality of the eternal, is often an enigma.

In the same way this constant habit of referring back

¹ Bishop Gore, *Sermon on the Mount*, p. 18.

to a scale of values not universally accepted differentiates the Christian artist in the world of art. Beauty as an end in itself is not sufficient for him. The ultimate values of Goodness, Truth and Beauty are undivided for him in the God he worships. He cannot separate them. There is "goodness" in his art. I do not mean religiosity, but such singleness of aim, such spontaneous choice, such method and such matter as satisfies the good within him as well as the beautiful. There is moral as well as artistic greatness to be found in Gothic architecture. There are moral as well as artistic comparisons to be drawn between the paintings of Titian and Paul Veronese, or Fra Lippo Lippi and Fra Angelico. It is the scale of eternity which makes the difference, the presence of the spiritual in the world of sense.

There are a hundred ways in which this faith in the centrality of God should make a difference. It gives a value of its own to the study of phenomena, the laborious collection of scientific facts. God is the centre of this world of phenomena. The man of science is revealing Him and may, if he will, calculate his life on the scale of eternity and give through his service to the Truth "moral" value to his work.

It gives men a vantage ground amid the swirl of evolutionary forces and the swift changes of life to be able to "refer back" to a God, central in the time process, Whose purpose for us is one of unchanging love. It makes a difference—to face life with so profound and potent a conviction. It affects each train of thought, tests each new philosophy, and directs conduct to an ordered end. It asserts itself equally in the small arena as in the big. The narrow domesticity of the home becomes enlarged by it; business relationships experience through it a moral revolution.

Secondly, the creed of a Christian compels him to view life as a moral struggle. He sees life in terms of probation. It is a world for him where character is being made and where in consequence souls are being lost or saved. His God—the God he worships—is a redeeming God who has entered into human nature resolved to bring this moral struggle to a victorious issue. The moral struggle dominates the present life, and this is why the attitude of the Christian seems to be prevaillingly moral rather than intellectual or æsthetic. It is not that these latter elements of his nature have not their ultimate values. They belong to eternity and eternity is explained by them. But they are subordinated in importance for the moment till the moral battle is won. They cannot be fully enjoyed or harmoniously combined except within the compass of a perfect moral nature. “Our very life here,” writes Dean Inge, “is bound up with the moral struggle. It is even more ultimately real and vital for us, as souls on probation, than the homage to Truth and Beauty which may occupy spirits set free. Nor is there any danger in our experience that morality may perish for want of an antagonist. The upward struggle in which morality lives has no finality; an achieved good always points the way to a possible better.”¹

It is time, I think, that we gave a peculiar *kudos* to such self-giving as concerns itself more directly with the moral struggle. The missionary, the evangelist, the priest, are persons rightly to be held in honour in any Christian community. Their vocations are directly concerned with the moral struggle. The community which despises them is no true Christian community. The priest who despises himself is not fit to be a priest. Self-giving, which is the

¹ Dean Inge, *Outspoken Essays*, Second series, “Confessio Fidei,” p. 29.

rule of all Christian life, is here devoted, if not to the highest, at least to the most pressing and most exacting end. On the outcome of the moral struggle depends the final destiny of the individual and the future of the human race.

The shortage of clergy, viewed in this light, becomes a moral disaster. It is something more than a merely institutional question. The way in which the shortage is discussed often suggests that it is little more than this. We speak of it without moral passion, and people think the question could be solved by providing new machinery which could be worked, as new machinery usually is worked, by fewer people. The real issue which is at stake is whether the call to dedicate oneself to the moral struggle, and to make the moral salvation of the world the work of a life is losing its hold on the young men of this generation. Is this particular kind of self-giving, which bears so close a resemblance to Christ's own self-giving, to lose its fascination for the followers of Christ?

Even though it may be urged that, unfettered by institutionalism, such dedication is often made through other channels, channels which provide more equal co-operation between the sexes, and impose no unnecessarily heavy burdens upon them, still the question does not lose any of the intensity of the moral challenge. Why is the Church not calling forth and attracting to itself this passion for service? Why does it not become the channel more generally sought after by people seeking to devote their lives to the moral struggle? Does its institutional life need to be made more flexible so that the spirit of service may flow more freely through it to a needy world?

Thirdly, the creed of a Christian compels him to interpret life in terms of human fellowship. The Incarnation

makes all humanity akin. In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek. Christ died for all men. In Him we have fellowship with one another. Such is the Christian view. Hence the Christian offers to the world a moral basis of fellowship founded upon the love of the Father equally shared by all. God "central" in human life becomes the social Gospel of Jesus in action. This Gospel is something more than a by-product of redemption. It is its logical outcome. The purpose of bringing men to "know" one another as brethren is as inseparable from the work of Jesus as the purpose of bringing them to know God as Father. The two purposes are not separate. They are one and indivisible.

Hence the *discontent*, the *passion* and the *idealism* which always mark the more intense forms of the Christian life. It is a "discontented" group which forms the vanguard of social progress in each age. With such a group the Christian finds himself in sympathy because he is always seeking a more harmonious relationship with his brethren. His Master has taught him the meaning of "Blessed are they that mourn." Social injustice creates in him an intense reaction. He sorrows over it. The cynical attitude of the man who boldly rejects fellowship, and the indifferent attitude of the man who is content to pay lip service to it, are equally impossible to him. He prefers to go to the cave of Adullam, where the discontented of each age gather round their David. He cannot help being a discontented man until the Kingdom of God is set up, and it is on the gospel that he grounds his dissatisfaction with things as they are, as he grounds his hopes for things as they shall be. Each crusade to expel such anti-social evils as intemperance or gambling or war arouses in him not merely interest but passion. Each new effort to knit men closer together through more

equal education, juster laws, a sounder economic system and international relationships built upon moral confidence calls for his devotion and support. Here again he remembers the word of His Master. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness." Could any metaphor be stronger? Appetite unsatisfied gives a man no rest. Hungering and thirsting when applied to a moral object indicates absorbing preoccupation. Other things are blotted out as when a starving man seeks food and drink. Such is or ought to be our attitude when some particular Righteousness—some new moral achievement—is almost within our grasp. There can be no rest until the thing is done. Moral enthusiasm is meant to shake us like a fever and master us like a passion: "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."¹

And with this discontent manifesting itself in moral passion is inevitably bound up an *idealistic aim*. If we are to accept Lord Birkenhead's definition of Idealism as "The spirit which impels an individual or group of individuals to a loftier standard of conduct than that which ordinarily prevails around him or them,"² then we must admit that such is the spirit of Christianity. And if we accept his definition of an Idealist as "one who places before himself in private or public affairs as attainable a goal which other citizens, perhaps equally moral, do not believe to be so attainable," we must admit that such is the Christian. It was Christian Idealism, regarded as monstrous at the time, which rescued the climbing boys from being suffocated in chimneys, which brought the children up from the coal mines where they had spent

¹ Ps. cxxxii. 4, 5.

² Lord Birkenhead, *Idealism in International Politics*.

their wretched days dragging coal in the dark. It is Christian Idealism, as yet very much in advance of its time, which expresses itself in these simple lines.

“ ’Twould ring the bells of Heaven
The wildest peal for years,
If Parson lost his senses
And people came to theirs,
And he and they together
Knelt down with angry prayers
For tamed and shabby tigers,
And dancing dogs and bears,
And wretched, blind pit-ponies,
And little hunted hares.”¹

I do not see how the “ taint ” of idealism, as some people would describe it, is to be removed from Christianity. It is part of the reproach of the Cross. The advanced Christian must always be irritating to men like Lord Birkenhead, who conscientiously believe that there are defects which are “ ineradicable ” in human nature and who have so much evidence to support them. The man of affairs naturally feels that he must shape his programme on such an assumption.

Yet, even from a practical point of view, the man who refuses to believe that defects are ineradicable deserves to receive more encouragement than Lord Birkenhead has seen fit to give him. Analogies are indeed of dubious value, but it is the man who believes that defects can be removed who confers most benefit on the community. The bicycle, the motor car, the aeroplane, have each in turn illustrated the value of faith in the possibility of perfection, or at least of the value of faith in the pursuit of it. The history of political institutions or the development of industry might each be used to illustrate the value to the community of unflagging search after the

¹ Ralph Hodgson, *Bells of Heaven*.

best. Similarly in the moral sphere it is inevitable that the Christian should figure as one who believes in the possibility of eradicating defects. "Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The real question which divides the Church is whether idealism is to be diluted or neat. It must seem at first sight that there is no question in the matter at all. No Christian lives a perfectly ideal Christian life. His surroundings do not permit it. The basis and structure of the society with which he is inextricably bound up stand in the way. How then can an undiluted idealism be recommended as an immediate and practical policy? I do not know that any recommend this policy to be applied without compromise or limit or delay to the whole of human life with all its multitudinous intricacies and complexities. But what is often recommended is the singling out of some particular problem or moral issue to which the rule of sheer idealism is to be applied. The problem which recent events has forced to the front, and for which such treatment is often demanded is the problem of war. In no circumstances, it is said, can a Christian fight; pacifism is the only Christian attitude on the subject.

It is not possible within the limits of this essay to enter into the arguments for or against pacifism. It concerns us rather as an illustration. Hatred of war and all its works is natural to those whose creative activity is Peace. We follow Him who said "Blessed are the peacemakers." There is no question about the steadfastness of the newly awakened conscience. The Christian is henceforth anti-war, as in the eighteenth or early nineteenth century he became anti-slavery. But pacifism fails to carry conviction as the normal expression of Christian Idealism. War is not the only evil which calls for decisive non-concur-

rence. The policy, if sincere, must be extended till non-concurrence in any form of evil arrests the circulation within the body politic. If it is argued that such non-concurrence need not be simultaneous in too many directions at once, we are left with the feeling that there is something arbitrary in the selection of the particular moral issue to which the method is applied.

It is invidious to make these comments, as personal experience of what war means fills me with a passionate desire to strip the last shred of glamour from it, reveal it in its naked horror and abolish it utterly. But I am bound to state that the uncompromising attitude towards any personal contact with social evil, on which the philosophy of pacifism rests, is not rooted in the example of Jesus Christ. It would be misleading to say that He compromised with evil, but it would be equally untrue to deny that He accepted compromising situations which might seem to condone the social evils of His time. Compare His attitude towards the Roman treatment of Jewish nationalism, His acceptance, in certain particulars, of Jewish separatism, His concurrence in the ordinary household slavery of the time, and the latitude of choice and discrimination which seems to be implied in the words "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

I prefer to shift the emphasis to the service which the pacifist, in spite of the weakness of his philosophy, may render to the community. In this I differ from Lord Birkenhead, who would emphasise the dangers, which are not to be denied, to which the pacifist may expose us. The pacifist reminds me curiously enough (I suppose I ought to apologise for the comparison) of the militant suffragette. It cannot be denied that the latter not only forced attention to the subject of Woman Suffrage—any

criminal can force attention by his crime—but aroused the conscience of the nation by the very distortion of the moral protest. The strain under which some women at any rate were suffering was seen to be intolerable. The injustice had to be removed. In the same way a sincere and stalwart pacifist prepared to go all lengths in non-concurrence in one particular form of social evil may appear to be giving a distorted protest; but the day may come when we shall have to admit that he was in the vanguard of the battle while we were in the rear, and that his fault was no more than that of going too far ahead as ours was no less than that of lagging too far behind.

The possibility of distortion in the pursuit of the Christian aim reminds me, as I close this essay, of the stress which our Lord lays upon a unifying principle and balance of character in the Christian life. In the last analysis the Creed of the Christian is Christ, and the final lessons lie here. The perfection of which Christ speaks is twofold—the perfection of a unifying principle and the perfection of a perfectly balanced character. The unifying principle is love, the various activities of which are reflected in the Beatitudes, but are to be found first of all in the life of Christ Himself. Christ lives the life of poverty or detachment because He loves, and love involves self-giving. Christ cannot acquiesce in things as they are, but “mourns” over them, because love enables Him to see the contrast between things as they are and things as they ought to be. Christ is meek and does not want to assert Himself because His life is rooted in love, and He has no claims of His own that He seeks to assert, but only the claims of others. Christ is full of passion for righteousness, full of moral violence because love is not a weak, anæmic sentiment but a consuming fire and an

explosive force. Christ is always merciful because love has no element of vindictiveness in it. Christ is pure in heart because love co-ordinates the entire being into singleness of aim. The beatitudes are nothing else than the expression of the inner life of Jesus perfectly unified by perfect love.

It is easy to see how lopsided and distorted our moral lives may become unless they are unified in a similar way. Let me quote the words of the Bishop of Manchester :

“ You will agree now that there is no exaggeration in speaking of the Christian character as an exquisitely delicate balance or poise of qualities. It is so easy to be gentle if one has no zeal for the right. It is so easy to be zealous if we allow ourselves to be censorious. Width of sympathy without earnestness of purpose will make us flabby and ineffective. Earnestness of purpose without width of sympathy will make us harsh and domineering. It is so easy to be good in one way or another ; but that partial goodness is as much bad as good.”¹

A good example of the danger of isolating one particular quality of character is to be found in Mr. Rudyard Kipling's treatment of Independence in his Rectorial Address at St. Andrews University. It may be defended on the ground that without exaggeration it is impossible to present the particular aspect of truth which we desire to present, so that it may rivet the attention and fascinate the will. The sincerity, the vigour and the challenging power of the address would make any preacher envious. But it is possible to attach too much importance to “ the blessed state of hanging on to as few persons and things as possible.” It is often sound, no doubt, for a man to store up “ rations in advance ” so that he may be

¹ Wm. Temple, *Studies in the Spirit and Truth of Christianity*, p. 214.

"independent of his tribe"; and the policy of a "man owning himself" has its points. But independence of this kind cannot be regarded as a virtue. The motive for which the independence is desired, the purpose for which a man seeks to own himself is what gives moral value to his actions. A man may achieve such independence as is described in the Address and remain callous and selfish to the end. Without the unifying principle of a loving purpose his independence may be equally virtuous or vicious.

Nor indeed is it possible to suggest as a watchword for humanity, "Let every herring hang by its own head." Economically and socially it is impossible. We are members one of another, and we can prosper neither materially, nor æsthetically, nor spiritually, apart from one another. It is only within narrow limits that the Gospel of independence can serve us.

The balance of teaching is to be found in Christ. It would be difficult to say whether the distinguishing mark of His life was dependence, independence, or interdependence. All three are intertwined. His dependence upon the Father was the inspiration of His life, His independence of "the herd" was absolutely conditioned by His sense of interdependence. He asserted his freedom only that He might be the slave of all. He stood apart only that He might the more effectively stand in with us. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, . . . and with His stripes we are healed."

It is to Christ that we must come for revision of the teaching offered to us by prophets and poets, ecclesiastics and moralists. What is good in it is set forth by Him properly proportioned to the moral end of life. In Him it loses none of its value. Too often our own idea of balance and proportion is simply to present a life without

any moral "excesses," but one which is jejune and stale and commonplace. It is only the great artist who can impress without excess of any kind, the "balance" of whose work arrests the eyes and does not weary it. To be great artists we must be filled with the Spirit of Jesus.

T. GUY ROGERS.

IX

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE FELLOWSHIP

INTRODUCTION

It would not be perhaps an exaggeration to say that there are probably more people seriously studying Christianity to-day than at almost any time in history. The fact that on every hand questions are being asked, oftentimes impatiently asked, is evidence of the widespread presence of the longing which leads to faith: for it is longing for God, not the lack of it, that asks questions. And yet side by side with this interestedness in religion, there is a widespread impatience with organised Christianity. Men who are drawn to Christ are as often as not out of temper with the Church. The land seems to be full of lonely seekers, pursuing the one quest, but pursuing it each in isolation.

It has been the glory of Evangelicalism to lay insistent emphasis upon the personal relationship between the individual and the Redeemer: to present Christianity in terms of personal love and service: to portray the all-sufficiency of our Saviour Christ to meet every need of every individual soul. It has been the weakness of much of our Evangelicalism that it has allowed the *corporate* aspect of religion to be veiled in uncertainty: and that it has insufficiently taught the relation of the individual to the Fellowship of which he is an integral part. It has not been sufficiently emphasised that by personal relationship to Jesus Christ the individual

becomes a living limb of the Body of Christ. This may no doubt be ascribed to a natural reaction against the rigid institutionalism preached monotonously on fifty-two Sundays in the year from many Anglican pulpits. But whatever may be its cause, it is none the less a weakness: and the time was never more opportune for a plain and simple statement of the Evangelical position regarding the relation of the individual to the Society of which he is a member.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF INDIVIDUALISM IN CHRISTIANITY

It apparently needs stating again and again that to speak of an "isolated Christian" is to make use of a contradiction in terms. Except for purposes of a theological dissecting-room an "isolated Christian" is as useless an object as an isolated finger or an isolated eye. The limb has no purpose save in relation to the living body to which it belongs and by whose life it lives. The Sons of God must be brothers in their Father's House.

All this appears sufficiently obvious not to need restating: and yet there is perhaps no fallacy that casts a wider spell over English minds than this, that a man can keep his religion as a private thing between his own soul and its Maker, and that it is nobody else's concern. "I keep myself to myself"; "I can worship God just as well on a lonely moor as in Church": these and similar statements, found frequently on the lips of folk who would count it a cruel insult if you were to deny them the name of Christian, are symptomatic of a point of view which, it must be admitted, is largely due to the fact that many of us in our presentation of the Christian message have over-emphasised the individual aspect at the expense of the corporate.

There is a picture to be found hanging in the front parlour or in the best bedroom of many homes in our land which expresses only too aptly the conception (or rather misconception) of the Christian religion widely but thoughtlessly accepted to-day. It is the familiar picture of a shipwrecked woman, clinging for dear life, in the midst of an angry and surging sea, to a rock against which the waves are breaking furiously. The expression on the face of the woman is either one of desperate relief as she discovers that (whatever may have been the fate of her shipmates in that storm) she at any rate has found something more solid than a floating oar to cling to, or one of desperate terror at each successive breaker, lest it shall tear her from the rock and suck her once again into the vortex of the angry sea below.

Sometimes the artist surmounts the rock with a Cross, and usually the picture-framer has added beneath two lines of an old Evangelical hymn :—

“ Rock of Ages, cleft for me
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

There, in extreme case, is the conception of an “ isolated Christian.” It is a cold and lonely business at best, and there is no other motive which can by any stretch of imagination be read into the picture than that of self-preservation. That picture must go, if only because so many have misinterpreted it and imagined that it represents the whole message of Christianity. No wonder that young men growing up in these homes have assumed that Christianity is a cold and lonely enterprise and have inwardly resolved to give it a wide berth. Our quarrel is not with the centrality of the Cross in the picture, for that is its truth : Christianity must ever present the challenge of the Cross : our quarrel is rather with the individualism implied. It is not the

Cross, but the isolation, which makes the picture untrue to life.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE CHURCH?

With all that has been written so far the reader will find himself in ready agreement: but the path leads us on to more difficult ground when we settle down to try to express what exactly we mean by "the Church." The question, however, cannot be evaded, and forbearance is asked if the answer is given in almost childish simple terms.

By the Church of Christ we mean, ideally, all those who, accepting Him as their King and trusting Him as God, have thereby a different aim in life from other people, and a different motive, and also a power which others have not. Christian Baptism implies that repentance (bringing the new motive) and faith (accepting the new power) have caused the individual to step out of an old life, to be buried with Christ, and to step into a newness of life with Christ. That is what going down into the water and coming up again means: and ideally every baptized person is one who has the new motive and the new power. The familiar passage in St. Matthew (xvi. 18) is worthy of study in this connection. St. Peter had discovered that Jesus was the Christ and that He was Son of God: in other words St. Peter had found the new motive and the new power. The Lord told him that this was not mere head-learning but the inspiration of God in his heart, and He went on to say that now a change of character was coming: Simon should become Peter, the reliable one; and this change of character would come to others too, so that they too would become reliable and strong. Moreover each new person who found the new motive would be responsible for opening

the door of the Kingdom to others, and would be to blame if through his failure others were to remain outside. There was the ideal, simple and convincing enough; and in the earliest days before the infant Church had strayed far out of sight of the ideal, it proved itself absolutely invincible: it swept gigantic obstacles out of its course.

But the trouble began when it became the proper thing to profess Christianity, when the Church and the world increasingly overlapped, when Baptism became the customary rite administered to infants, and consequently the line of demarcation between those who had received the new motive and the new power and those who had not became to all intents and purposes obliterated. When we are talking of the Church ideally and mean all those who have the new motive and the new power, we sometimes speak of it as the Church *Invisible*.

But the Church of Christ was given work to do on earth, work that requires organisation, and so it is necessary for it to be a visible body of men and women, each recognising the rest as fellow-members, and all so organised that so far as is possible the talents of each may be used in co-ordination with the rest, for the extension of the Kingdom. In the Boat Race the winning eight achieves success, not by virtue of any individual superiority of its members over the members of the rival boat: victory goes to the crew which has learned to the highest degree the science of pulling together. The individual may be faultless in his own mastery of the oar, but his inclusion in the university eight will be dependent far less upon his individual skill and power than upon his capacity for bringing these into complete harmony with the rowing of his fellows. One man pulling out of time spells certain defeat for his boat. The tow-path has

many a lesson to teach Christians and Christian Churches, and the lesson of "pulling together" is not the least important. Nor is there any branch of our common life to-day in which the same lesson is not being writ plain, that if the worker is to achieve his highest personal usefulness, he must be a *fellow-worker*. Hence, if the work of God is to be done in the world, the Church must be an organised body, and this is the idea in our minds when we speak of the *Visible Church*.

Now it is generally assumed that Whitsunday was the birthday of the Visible Church: but in a most striking book, *The Spirit*, edited by Canon Streeter, Professor Anderson Scott in an illuminating chapter seeks to answer the question: "What happened at Pentecost?" He takes us back in thought to the Upper Room with its gathering of some hundred and twenty persons, men and women, numerous enough to include many widely divergent types of character and experience, and including the entire apostolic band, its number now restored to twelve. What had brought this company together, what was holding them together, was a common attitude of mind and will to Jesus of Nazareth; an attitude of the whole personality involving not only the feelings—admiration, affection, sorrow at His removal, wistful longing for His return—but also the intellect and the will. In Jesus they had yielded to the authority of a unique personality, a character wholly inspired by love, and at His bidding they were waiting for the fulfilment of the promise of His gift of Power. They believed the fulfilment was imminent; that God's promise would be fulfilled; that He would pour forth of His Spirit.

It was to the disciples of Jesus, taking up this attitude to Him, and gathered in one place, that the Spirit came. As they waited the Spirit came, and such an event

naturally brought with it elements of emotional tension and strained expectation, as well as elements of assured faith and joyful thankfulness. And these former elements in the psychological situation, as was natural, did not fail to make their contribution to, and leave their impress upon, the account which was afterwards given of the events of Pentecost. The rushing mighty wind, the shaking of the place where they were assembled together, the speaking with tongues, the signs and wonders and mighty works, the gifts of healing, the working of miracles, the discerning of spirits—these and many other signs of His Presence, followed in the wake of that coming of the Spirit. But for the most part these were transitory, and before even one generation had passed away many of these *psychological* manifestations had already fallen into discredit, while the less immediate and less spectacular, but more enduring, *ethical* results asserted their supremacy. St. Luke told the story of Pentecost as he received it from someone who may have been in the company, regardless of the fact that the coming of the Spirit was no longer evidenced by the same physical phenomena. He laid himself open indeed to the challenge, "How do we know that the Spirit really comes now, seeing that these things do not happen now?" But he relied on the consciousness of the Church to dismiss such a challenge with an appeal to religious and ethical experience.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AT PENTECOST?

Many have been content to answer "The Church." Some regard the Church as created on that day; others see it coming to self-consciousness and taking shape before the eyes of man at Pentecost. But St. Luke markedly

refrains from using the word "Church," preferring such phrases as "They that believed," "The brethren," and the like. Dr. Anderson Scott's inference is that, neither in the manifestations of supernatural phenomena, nor in the special gifts and powers which were subsequently traced to the Spirit's Presence, nor even in the foundation of the Church, do we find the real explanation of what happened at Pentecost. The primary result, he says, of the Spirit's coming and the result which was permanent, was what was recognised and described as "the Fellowship," and the symbol of "the Fellowship" to which highest importance was attached, was "the Loaf." "They were steadfastly adhering to the teaching of the Apostles, and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."¹ Here is the new name for the new thing: Community of Spirit issuing in community of life: a Fellowship so vital as to give rise immediately to the most daring and thorough-going (though apparently short-lived) experiment in communism. St. Paul recognises the reality and the importance of this new thing and gives it the same name. He reminds his Corinthian friends that it is a faithful God Who has called them into "the Fellowship of Christ," by which he means not only the Companionship of Christ, but also the Fellowship named after Him.

The records of the primitive Church lay the greatest possible stress on fellowship: its most wonderful experiences of God revealed in Jesus Christ were "when they were all together," and it is this New Testament development of man's relationship to God that is receiving fresh emphasis to-day. And it is in this fresh emphasis on New Testament truth that the hope of revival lies. Already we are hearing more of this aspect. Expressions

¹ Acts ii. 42.

such as "Corporate Mind," "Corporate Prayer," so common in religious parlance to-day, are indicative of the fact. Such phrases as these have grown out of St. Paul's distinctive teaching about the Body of Christ: "We who are many are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another." The many members not only *belong* to one body, but they *are* one body; and it would be hard to find a more apt illustration, for the human body surely is the most wonderful example to be found on earth of variety in unity. "As the human body is one and has many members, all the members forming one body for all their number, so it is with Christ."¹ Christians are a community, and the spiritual life of the followers of Jesus Christ is incalculably impoverished if this truth is overlaid by any undue individualism that seeks isolation to find God. Christians are a community animated by one Spirit, who is the Lord, and their corporate life is the expression of the animating Spirit. As well may you think of a Christian apart from his relationship to the Church, as conceive of a man seeking admission into Freemasonry on the understanding that he shall be an isolated freemason, having no relation to his lodge and independent of the Masonic Brotherhood.

As we have already seen, a new thing came into the world on the Day of Pentecost, a new phenomenon which we have called "The Fellowship." That was the abiding reality and it preceded the organised Church, and because of the reality of the Fellowship, the Church can take different forms of outward organisation.

What then do we mean by the Church? We mean the Fellowship of all those who are united to Christ: an organism with Christ at its centre which exhibits the

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 12, Moffatt's trans.

fruits of the Spirit. Now this "Fellowship," or rather this Spirit which is the life principle at the heart of the Fellowship, will naturally express itself in different ways and under different modes in different environments. I suppose that because we are human, we shall always be pursuing the futile and impossible quest of seeking to limit the Spirit, to stereotype His expressions, to confine Him into this mode or that method, but the Spirit being *alive* will always refuse to recognise the barriers we set up for Him, and ever and anon will surprise us with manifestations of His Presence in places where we little thought to acknowledge Him.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof." For us, therefore, it were presumption as well as folly to deny the name of Church to any organisation with Christ at its centre which is manifesting the fruits of the Spirit; even though such organisation might not on some points of faith or order fit into our conception of what a true Church ought in these respects to be. But this much at least we have a right to demand, as indeed others have a right to demand it of us, that the life of the Christian congregation in every place ought to be seen from the outside to be "the Fellowship" organised for action. For us Anglicans that fellowship has been organised on the lines of Episcopal law and order familiar to us all. Would that our influence as a Church were always more worthy of that great conception.

We think of the Church, then, as the Body of Christ, and the chief purpose of a body is to enable its possessor to help other people, to show them his character, to express himself to them. Christ wants to express Himself, to teach everyone of the love of God, to show His own perfect character, and to influence everyone in the

right direction : and for this He requires His Body. And if His Body is to fulfil its primary function, then it must all the time be bearing a strong corporate witness. It must be a fellowship of men and women who are out to re-instate the "Gospel values." We must recover, in the words of F. R. Barry, "unedited truth as it flames forth on the world in Christ Jesus." It must be a fellowship not of those who seek to water down the Sermon on the Mount to make it fit either their own ecclesiastical or social scale of values, but rather of those who seek together to understand and to express the mind and thought of Christ, and bring them to bear on all the complex range of human living. First things must be put first in its corporate witness, and the Church must be as obviously keen to help forward any great movement that makes for social righteousness as it proved itself keen in its resistance of a measure for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. It is to the claims of the Kingdom of God, rather than to the claims of any particular branch of the Church of Christ itself, that the corporate witness must be given unceasingly.

By the claims of the Kingdom of God we mean the rule of God in all human affairs, whether personal, social, industrial, national or international; and the individual Christian who realises his membership in the Body of Christ will find avenues of Christian service infinite alike in number and variety, as he seeks in his own community to contribute his share towards the Church's primary task, which is that of making Jesus King in the whole of our human life. The old false distinction between sacred and profane vanishes, and to strive to be a truly Christian town-councillor, or to throw our weight into the keeping of some great national sport clean, or the carrying out day by day, in co-operation with others,

of the particular work undertaken by the local branch of Rotary, these and a hundred other similar avenues of service will be seen to be as truly Church work as, for instance, attendance at the monthly Branch Meeting of the C.E.M.S., or the weekly parade of the C.L.B., or even the handing round of the offertory bag in Church. Nor should it be necessary to point out that, to the man or woman with technical training in pastoral, medical or educational work, the great Christian Mission Fields of the world to-day offer the most impelling challenge for service, where it can count most in the Kingdom of God.

“ The Missionary Societies are marking time, when they ought to be going forward. The Social problem at home, with all the chaotic mass of moral and physical evil that hides under that name, threatens to get altogether beyond the efforts of organised Christianity. In both cases we may be quite sure that no other solution will be found save in self-sacrificing, personal service on the part of those who have learnt that true life is in Christ alone.”¹

THE SACRAMENTS

Ideally, as we saw when we were defining the *Invisible Church*, every baptized person is one who has the new motive and the new power : one, that is, who desires to enter the freemasonry of Christ, to be a limb of His Body.

Baptism is the infinitely solemn rite of initiation into the Fellowship; and it may be we should realise the meaning of the Fellowship more vividly if adults alone were baptized, people who could with their own mouth

¹ E. S. Woods, *Modern Discipleship*, pp. 121, 122.

and consent accept the position and declare their willingness and desire for a share in the great Fellowship life : but we cannot get away from the fact that infants were baptized in very early times,¹ and so we have concluded that Christ means to give His part of the Sacrament to infants before they can think about it or exercise their wills. But our realisation of the real meaning of the Great Fellowship is quite unnecessarily dulled by the lack of imagination and general inertia which have allowed the Great Sacrament of initiation, of ingrafting into the Body of Christ, to become in so many parishes a semi-private "hole-in-the-corner" ceremony, perfunctorily performed by the junior curate on a weekday evening, in the presence of a congregation numbering less than a dozen souls. It is obviously wrong for sponsors to come and take in the name of a child solemn obligations and vows, which they have never bothered to ratify in their own persons by coming forward for confirmation. As we recover a renewed realisation of that most wonderful and dynamic thing in the world, the Christian Fellowship, so the Sacrament of Holy Baptism must inevitably come back again into its own.

Having, then, by Baptism entered into the freemasonry of Christ, the Christian should be taught that he is now a member, a limb, of Christ's Body, and that therefore Christ will want to use him in co-ordination with His other members for His own self-expression in the world. This necessitates that the Christian must be in vital touch with Christ, the Head of the Body. And the one great link which all the members have with one another and with Him is the Holy Communion. The word "Communion" implies this; it is often used in the New Testament with the meaning "Fellowship," and St.

¹ Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.* II. 22.

John says the reason why we tell people about Christ is that they may be linked up with us because we are linked up with God.¹ St. Paul suggests that the great act of Communion, the great symbolic linking-up of the members of Christ's Body, is when we all eat from one loaf and all drink from one cup. It was the experience of many of us who were Chaplains at the Front, that of all the services which we held for our men, the one which was most of all appreciated, and sometimes by the most unlikely of men, was the service of the Holy Communion.

It may be that the motives were mixed which brought many of them to that service: it is difficult to believe that there were many who came just because it was the thing to do: but one fact is beyond question, that the Holy Communion became in those days for the majority, in fuller measure than they had ever proved it before, the great Sacrament of Fellowship, in which they found themselves partakers of the Loaf. Here if anywhere individualism can rightly find no place: the Christian man belongs to a company in the army of Christ, and so he meets Sunday by Sunday the other members of that company in his parish Church to join them in doing that which his Lord commanded, eat broken bread and drink wine: and in so doing he is linked up the closer with those other members, and also in a true sense with all the members who are doing the same thing in other places, other companies or even other battalions. As he kneels in Church and feels that the same service, conducted (despite variety of liturgy) with similar intent for the same purpose, is being held everywhere where there are fellow-members of the Body, he realises a closeness to his friends all over the world, and knows that it is because we are linked with Him that we are linked with one another.

¹ 1 John i. 3.

The English layman as he comes to receive the Holy Communion in his parish Church, finds himself caught up into a Fellowship which is frontierless: he is partaker of the one loaf, the one cup, the one great "Family Feast" of the All-Father's family, as he receives his spiritual food from the One Living Lord and Master of us all, Himself the Host, Himself the Food. "He is bound—if he could only realise it—by invisible family bonds to a great company of comrades, to sturdy laughing African boys, trudging through the jungle in the grey dawn, summoned by the swift call of native wireless to some village where a missionary on trek promised overnight to take a Communion service next morning: to Japanese Communicants, meeting in the ruins of a Tokyo Church which they are beginning to rebuild after the earthquake: to a handful of Christians, staff and patients, in a hospital among the Chinese mountains: to a band of Indian students meeting for the Sacrament before they go out on a preaching tour in the villages near their college: to brown islanders of the South Seas, paddling across the sunlit lagoon to their Church on the opposite hillside. They all belong to us and we to them, for we are all Christ's. We are together in His Presence."¹

And as he finds that barriers of distance in space fall powerless before the fellowship of this Sacrament, so too he realises that the barriers of distance in time have disappeared. Here he is one with his Elder Brethren who have passed over; one with a great multitude which no man can number of every nation and kindred and tongue; one with all those who have since the first Maundy Thursday evening "sat at meat with Jesus," and seen Him take of the commonest things of earth and fill them with a Divine meaning. Nowhere on earth,

¹ *A World-wide Family*, R. W. Howard, C.M.S.

surely, does the veil that hides our Elder Brethren from our view become so thin, so almost transparent, as in the Sacrament of Fellowship.

It is the Sacrament of Fellowship because it is the Sacrament of Service: in the Acts it is always called the "Breaking of Bread." When our Lord took bread and broke it, saying, "This is My Body," He meant (among other things) that His Body was going to be broken, killed on the Cross: and when (as St. Paul tells us) He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me," He meant, not merely "Do the outward sign," not merely "Break the Bread," but also surely, "Do the inward thing that is signified," "Be willing to break the Body"; for the disciple is not above his Master, and the Church which is the Body of Christ, must, if she would share in His Redemptive work, be willing to give herself to the breaking.

And Holy Communion is the Sacrament of Service because it is the "Sacramentum." The very name is borrowed from the old-world oath of allegiance taken by the Roman private soldier, swearing loyalty to his general. It is the rite in which the individual Christian comes to give, to give his loyalty, to give himself—to the breaking if need be. "Here, Lord, we offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a living sacrifice."

What a travesty of the original meaning and intention of the "Sacramentum" that the individual should approach it for what he can get! Selfish gain, selfish advantage—even though it be spiritual advantage—simply can have no place in the primary intention of him who draws near with anything like a true understanding of what he is doing. Selfishness is always an ugly thing, and religious selfishness is not less ugly than any other kind. That the Spirit of the Master, nay

more, the Master's very life, His own Self, passes into the life of the servant who thus comes to renew his fealty, is the acknowledged truth; but the very life of the Master becomes his, just in proportion as the servant comes not to get, but to give. And here, right at the heart of the Fellowship, is set the Sacrament in which the disciples for ever remember to what lengths their Master was prepared to go in His self-oblation for the world, in which too, the Church, His Body, dedicates herself anew to the life of sacrificial service.

THE NEED OF " ESPRIT DE CORPS "

It is from our exaggerated individualism, and from the fact that we have so largely lost sight of the true meaning of the Fellowship and of the two Sacraments which are set one at the door, and the other in the very centre of the Fellowship, that much of the ineffectiveness of our modern Christianity springs. The man who is a Christian primarily because of any advantages that may accrue to him thereby, is doomed to disappointment and disillusionment, as surely as the recruit who joined up in war-time in order that he might expand his chest measurement a couple of inches. We need to bring into our religion a good deal more of that *esprit de corps* which is the glory of our best Public Schools, that sense of belonging to a great fellowship and inheriting a great tradition: and we need to remember that the *esprit de corps* is both built up, and then apprehended, by those who have seen in the common life an opportunity for service, not by those who viewed their school solely as existing to give them certain intellectual and social and moral commodities apart from their co-operation in the corporate life and service of the school. To put it in

other words, our power to contribute to, and to apprehend, the Fellowship is directly proportionate to our willingness to lose ourselves in the service of the whole Body.

"As soon as we get outside ourselves and the narrow limitations of our own individuality into a group consciousness, a new sense of possibility springs to birth. The weakness of one is reinforced by the strength of another, the hesitations of one by the certainties of another, and a body of truth is slowly wrought out by many minds working together, each contributing its little fragment, and God becomes more real, more intimate and more omnipotently present."¹

And we need sorely in these days to remember that the *esprit de corps* must be that of the whole fellowship, not merely an enthusiastic attachment to the one particular small section of it in which we find our own personal interests set. We must beware of mistaking "cliquishness" for "fellowship," which is a danger and not a strength to our corporate Christianity. We must see to it that the base of our fellowship is not less wide than our Master bade us build it. For so easily,

"We make His Love too narrow,
With false limits of our own;
And we magnify His strictness
With a zeal He will not own."

There is a loyalty to party, more for party's sake than truth's, which, even though it means the merging of the individual's personal interests in the well-being of the group, is yet the very antithesis of Christian Fellowship. Our membership is not of Paul, nor of Cephas nor of Apollos: our membership is not of this parish nor of that rural deanery. We were not baptized into Evangelicalism nor into Anglo-Catholicism; we were baptized

¹ J. A. Chapman.

into Christ. Our membership is in Him; and it is in Him alone that we meet and find community of life and the fellowship which is of the Holy Ghost. From our growing realisation of the larger fellowship will come courage and vision and buoyancy of faith for times of strain and discouragement; and the individual who finds that progress is slow on his small sector of the fighting front, will not so readily assume that on that account "Christianity is played out."

"What though the tired waves vainly breaking
Seem here no painful inch to gain?
Far back through creeks and inlets making
Comes silent, flooding in, the main."

But for this right relationship of the individual Christian to the Church there is a price which the individual needs must pay. Our corporate Christianity makes big and searching demands upon our individual characters.

It has been pointed out that the Beatitudes are a very complete picture of Christian Fellowship and emphasise the "family" relationships of the Christian community. Certain it is that humility is a primary qualification for the right relationship with which this essay, however inadequately, has attempted to deal. There is an unconscious tendency to assume that the humility inculcated in the New Testament is a relation to God rather than a relation to man, whereas it is a fundamental law of service in the Kingdom of Heaven. Humility desires to share the quest with all the others, lovers of Jesus, who are seeking Him from standpoints other than our own, and makes us willing to learn even from those who see differently from us. It rejoices not in party triumphs, but rejoices in the truth. It implies loyalty to comrades in the quest (the measure of our loyalty to Christ is the measure of our loyalty to His members), the loyalty that

means keeping faith and truth; the friendliness which is ever on its guard against small prejudices and the creeping in of the temper of insistence on non-essentials which destroys loyalty of spirit. All this, and more than this, is demanded of us, if we fain would help to heal the wounds which not merely disfigure the Body of Christ, but sap its vitality.

Nor is the lesson of "living corporately" one which can be learned in a week, or in a month, or in a decade. It means the definite shouldering of a cross every day. "Let patience have her perfect work." It is just in this art of pulling together, of team-work, that the greatest demands will continually be made upon our individual Christianity; and it is only the Christ Himself within us who is equal to these demands. A paraphrase of 1 Corinthians xiii. 7, runs

" All things He bears, all things believes,
All things He hopes, all things endures,
Love never fails."

An ideal like that is obviously not reached in a moment. In the words which Meyers puts into the mouth of St. Paul:—

" Let no man think that sudden in a minute
All is accomplished and the work is done;
Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst begin it,
Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun."

It demands a daily striving from us all; and yet no striving of ours will suffice to bring the Fellowship we seek. It is the gift of God; it is born of the Spirit. It is true to say that we cannot organise this spirit of Fellowship, this "corporate sense"; yet it is equally true that there are conditions which God waits for us to fulfil before He can bestow the gift He longs to give. It is

His to send the Spirit; it is ours to prepare the home for the Spirit to dwell in. Fellowship will come as a gift from God when we wait for it in that same attitude which was theirs who first waited for it nineteen hundred years ago in the Upper Room in Jerusalem, the attitude of the turning of the whole man, emotions, mind, and will, to Christ. "For truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

G. C. L. LUNT.

X

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

"SEPARATION" as a religious factor in social life appears to be so alien to the best instincts within us, that some justification of its existence as a Christian doctrine is demanded. We can readily see that sin separates man from God, that temperament separates person from person, or that nationality separates race from race. Controversy about religion, it is also easy to see, is deplorably active in its separating tendencies. But that Religion, as such, should raise a social barrier, and that between persons who hold the same Faith, may well seem perplexing to many. Apart from any doubtful etymology of the word religion, it is felt instinctively that it, more than anything else, should unite men, should relate us not only to God, but to our fellow-creatures.

Yet it has not always been proved to do so. The very earnestness with which religion has been held has in certain cases produced a mentality that could not help being exclusive. Evangelical people know very well that with many "separation" from things "worldly" has been the main tenet, and almost the test, of spiritual reality, so that whether a man was or was not a "Christian" depended on his aloofness or otherwise from certain clearly defined phases of social recreation.

This type is, of course, poles apart from that which developed earlier, the ecclesiastical asceticism of the monastery, which "separated" those who took the vows

from those who did not. The feature of the type we refer to is that it is non-ecclesiastical, even non-organised, and yet in England and in America prevalent and influential to a remarkable degree.

The saintliness of many of those who would thus seek to divide "real" Christians from the so-called "worldly" ones is so manifest that one hesitates to criticise them, but there is no need so to do. It is sufficient to try to state the case candidly, and, we hope, with much sympathy for those from whom we may differ.

THE IDEA IN HISTORY

Separation has its roots in history and therefore must be respected as a principle. It can scarcely have originated in human nature, for however much selfishness may be found in him, man is at heart a social animal. The long history of religion, however, shows that there have always been types of people in every religion who interpreted God's will (or whatever was substituted for it) differently from their neighbours, more exclusively than did many of their co-religionists.

It would take us too far afield to trace this tendency back through mediæval asceticism to pre-Christian types like that of the Essenes, and in a wider sphere to the various esoteric groups in the Oriental systems. Suffice it to say that the attitude has seemed to persist, and therefore may be expected to be found in modern times, especially when a revival of the more personal aspect of religion takes place.

We therefore see in the upheaval of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the obvious occasion for the idea, and we find it in the emergence of the "puritan" out-

look within and, later outside of, the Church of England. So far as the controversies related to doctrine or organization we are not here concerned with them. But when in Elizabeth's reign the dictum was laid down that "Nothing which has not the *direct sanction* of Scripture ought to be employed in divine worship," we are at the root of it. The statement referred immediately to ceremonial, but the mentality behind that could not stop there. The principle was bound to pass on into social life, and "God's Word," interpreted too often with the bias of prevailing antagonisms, became for many the one and only standard of living.

No one would object to that generally speaking, but when particular interpretations were taken as general principles, and when these interpretations became stereotyped in an attitude of social isolation, then of course the situation became difficult in the extreme. The dictum above stated would not be easy to carry out at any time in worship, but when practical life was to be ruled by it, then it became much more difficult. It was obvious that many would refuse to make it read "Nothing that is not directly sanctioned by our interpretation of particular texts ought to be done by Christian people in social life." A position so exclusive was bound to provoke reaction, and the Church of England never authoritatively supported or recognised it. Hooker's judicious mind saw that while the Church must appeal to Scripture, she must be guided in her interpretations thereof by the history of the past and by the free intelligent judgment of the present. Liberal Evangelicals in supporting Hooker's view are in line with the main stream of tendency in the Church.

Taking up the question then with our Evangelical brethren, we ask ourselves, Does Scripture taken as a

whole justify this attitude of aloofness from the ordinary recreations of social life? And further, if Scripture did justify at any time ("because of the present distress") the position of those to whom "separation" was synonymous with "isolation," can we in the changed circumstances of to-day interpret it as they did? Can we accept the traditional interpretations as binding for all time? Let us search the Scriptures.

THE JEWISH IDEA OF SEPARATION

It is scarcely to be doubted that, speaking generally, the separation idea runs right through the Old Testament. At first it is mainly the expression of a particular relationship between Jehovah and the Chosen Race. As the national life and religion developed, this relationship expressed itself in definite ritual that marked the Jews off from the other nations, and almost every phase of their social and religious life was influenced by it. As time went on, especially under the call of the prophets, a ritual idea of holiness became more and more charged with moral meaning so that a moral affinity between the holiness of Jehovah and the holiness of His people was the ideal of their life. At whatever stage, however, we consider the matter, it seems clear that the Jews, in spite of many shortcomings, regarded themselves as *kadash*, "holy," separated unto God and from the heathen around. This consciousness degenerated at times into little more than a sense of "favouritism," but the persistence of the underlying idea gave to the prophets the lever with which to call the people to higher standards.

By the time Christ came, the moral idea itself had withered to some extent, under the blight of traditionalism, leaving the nation as a whole unable to appreciate

the spontaneous freshness of the holiness of the Prophet of Nazareth. The few, however, who were single-minded enough to do so, "received" Him, and were made the instruments of a new wave of spiritual and moral idealism which has influenced Christendom ever since. We have here another instance of the fact that progress is seldom, if ever, a matter of continuous advance, but that, like the incoming tide, it appears to recede again and again, while still under God's Providence it is making towards its appointed end. The Apostles of Christ were wise enough to see this, and to realise that, however greatly their own race had fallen away, the ideal they had had was the true one, and so they take ritual and even historical incidents and facts of the Jewish past and spiritualise them for Christian use. At Pentecost St. Peter interpreted their experience in terms of the prophecy of Joel; later St. Stephen spiritualised the material glory of Solomon's Temple into the moral glory of the temple "not made with hands"; St. Paul, looking back to the Exodus, sees something "sacramental" in what happened "in the cloud and in the sea." When St. Peter writes to the whole Church he takes up the same message, using a "ritual" regulation to form the basis of a "moral" precept. "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.'"¹

SEPARATION AS SEEN IN CHRIST

As may be expected, the life of Christ demonstrates a separateness that is striking both in what it does and in what it does not do. The Lord was, of course, actually as well as ideally separate from sinners, morally and

¹ 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

spiritually distinct from even the best of His race. But the candid student of the Gospels must surely admit that the impress left by Christ on His age—and therefore on human society for all time—was that of One to whom nothing human was alien, to whom everything was of God except sin. With Him, somehow, spiritual separateness did *not* connote social aloofness; He enjoyed and partly provided the hospitality of a wedding feast, He went to dinner with a tax-gatherer, and talked for a long time with a woman whose “past” He knew well. And this was not merely incidental, for He discoursed at length on the fact that even a sacred institution like the Sabbath was “made for man” and not, as the Pharisees seemed to think, “man made for the Sabbath.” Indeed with the Pharisee type of life so patent to Him, He must either have approved it or repudiated it, and He did the latter in no uncertain tone.

It is this ability to combine spiritual purity with social comprehensiveness that makes the Lord’s human character so attractive, and raises Him, humanly speaking, so far above His followers in the art of living. In dealing with the world from the Christian standpoint, we too often make a wilderness and call it peace; He made a synthesis and called it spiritual life.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The first Apostles had not an easy task, but in one respect it was easier than that which later ages have had to face. The “world” was clearly defined both by its heathen standards and by its numerical superiority. The “Church” was in its holy ways as obvious as was the “world” in ways that were not holy. But nearly two thousand years of Christian teaching has altered

this, and so it is idle to interpret Scripture merely as it related to the situation at the first. Perhaps the history of the "isolation" theory of separation in modern times may be traced to this, as was the genesis of it to the circumstances of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When, then, we of to-day consider such precepts as "Love not the world," we must remember how much more difficult it is to see wherein the "worldliness" consists than it was when the precept was first given.

"Love not the world." St. John is referring not to the earth or to the human race, but to what has been defined as "Society organised apart from God." And the word "love" is the stronger of the two words commonly used in the New Testament; so "Love not . . ." must mean "give not your supreme affection to society wherever it is organised apart from God." The signs, too, are clear, "the lust of the flesh," "the lust of the eyes," "the pride of life"; thus every Christian must keep himself unspotted from the "over-desire" that centres on things carnal or self-indulgent or selfish. This is perfectly clear, and marks that distinctive note that is always characteristic of God's people. But details are not given, and we must avoid the danger of standardising particular details as though they were permanent principles. Each age will interpret the principle of "distinctiveness" according to the circumstances in which it finds itself, but to do so it must go deeper than mere surface symptoms. The true principle is not necessarily seen in social activities, but only fully in that which includes or excludes God.

St. Paul also gives us a precept which covers a practical call. He says in his letter to the Corinthians "Come ye out and be separate." Quoting as he is from the Book of Isaiah, this statement, like that of St. Peter

above mentioned, links up the Old and the New Testaments. What does the Apostle mean? A careful study of the whole letter shows that his mind is running on a series of antitheses, which Christian apostleship demonstrates. The insufficiency of man, and the "all-sufficiency of God," the earthly tabernacle "in which we groan" and the heavenly tabernacle in which we shall be permanently "at home" with the Lord. Then there are his personal experiences, "as unknown yet well known," "as dying and behold we live," "as poor yet making many rich," "as having nothing yet possessing all things." Clearly Christian experience means rising into larger life than that which the world gives. So "for a like recompense of reward" he says to the Corinthian Christians, "Be ye enlarged," be not yoked in "unequal" bonds with unbelievers, for there is, and can be, no spiritual affinity between right and wrong, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, faith and unbelief, the Temple of God and an idol temple. Wherefore—like the priests of whom the prophet spake—"Come ye out and be separate, and touch no unclean thing," so that your affinity to God as sons, and God's affinity to you as Father, may be mutually complete. Here the apostle is dealing not with social activities but with personal holiness, not with things expedient or inexpedient but with things essentially right and essentially wrong. Confirmation of this is seen in his next words: "Having therefore this promise—of mutual Fatherhood and sonship—let us cleanse ourselves not from the activities of our neighbours but from "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," perfecting in this way our holiness, our separateness, in the fear of God.

It would appear, then, that basing our views, as we must, on Scripture, two fundamental principles emerge :

1. That both Old and New Testaments presuppose throughout a *spiritual distinctiveness* between the people of God and the people who are not of God, between "the man of God" and the "man of the world."

2. That the New Testament, which is our special guide, seldom if ever descends to details, and never at any time robs the Christian of that "*liberty* that is in Christ Jesus," when deciding as to the application of general principles.

If these be true interpretations of Scripture, then two practical inferences follow :

(a) That godly men, as Christians, must maintain a standard of personal holiness quite distinct from that of the godless or non-Christian people around.

(b) That since neither Christ nor His Apostles have laid down detailed regulations binding Christian men on this point, the Christian community must refuse to allow either Pope or Puritan to settle these matters of social activity for them, and must not accept as authoritative either conventional ideas of "sin" or traditional interpretations of "worldliness."

That is what Liberal Evangelicals stand for in this connection, the right of private judgment in the application of principle to detail; and without criticising the attitude of their forefathers, liberty to analyse the situation for themselves, and to act according to their own convictions. They believe that to be the true expression of Modern Puritanism, the principle of spiritual distinctiveness brought up to date.

At once then we come face to face with an entirely new situation, a view of life that was practically unknown

to our forefathers in the faith, and to which therefore they could not be expected to have applied the principle. We refer to what is nowadays called—

THE SYNTHETIC OUTLOOK

What is meant in this, that the modern mind has learned so much about the Universe and the method on which it is worked, that it simply must regard it wholly instead of sectionally. That is, it regards it as a "synthesis" or composite whole, no longer to be divided fundamentally into watertight compartments, labelled "sacred" and "secular." The compartments are for practical purposes distinguishable of course, but only as a temporary expedient. Ultimately "wholeness" is the dominant note of this conception of the Universe, and all the activities of Science, Art, Music, Education, Industry, Invention, and Religion are conceived as phases, and only as phases, of one vast scheme of energy. "And Religion," we said, for religion, as such, cannot be considered apart from its relation to other phases of life, and "spirituality" is to the modern mind meaningless if it touches only one part of man's being, and applies to only one aspect of human activity.

This is the synthetic outlook, and there are some who would say that it is the only truly religious view, for it accepts the idea of a *universe* in a way a merely sectional outlook cannot; philosophically it unifies life as such, spiritually it postulates One Source and Sustainer of all things, and socially it bases the common brotherhood of man on the fact of the common Fatherhood of God. Little as they intended it, our evangelical forefathers, with their dualistic outlook—setting certain activities aside as wrong in use apart from abuse—were really

irreligious. They broke up the Universe into two antipathetic spheres (not merely distinguishable but contradictory), and by inference they postulated two rulers of these spheres on an equal footing, namely God Who ruled in "sacred" things and Satan who ruled in "secular" things. As a practical outcome of this implicit but real dualism, they made "spirituality" to consist of a few directly religious characteristics and exercises, leaving "worldliness" to connote all the other ordinary activities of ordinary human life.

Let us be frank—the *modern mind refuses to accept this view*. It cannot believe that normal human activity is essentially non-spiritual; it cannot conceive the Supreme Being to such an extent a Prisoner in the midst of His own Universe as only to dominate a fraction of it, and to leave His enemy to be residuary legatee of all the rest. Further the type of saintship evolved by the "isolation-separation" process does not commend itself to the people of to-day. It savours too much of a sheltered other-worldliness and not enough of the robust and rugged saintship that is hammered out in conflict with the evil it destroys. The modern Evangelical recognises with thankfulness that Shaftesbury and Wilberforce were members of the Evangelical school of thought, but it confesses with shame that Evangelicalism (in company with other schools) allowed the whole vast industrial system of the nineteenth century to grow up without one conscious effort to influence it as such. So far as we are concerned, this result was due, not to indifference, but to individualism, to the mental outlook that isolated the saving of the soul from the sanctifying of the soul's environment.

And as applied to social life, the isolated attitude has had effects that are to us not altogether desirable or neces-

sary. Evangelicals do not indeed care much for the mediævalism that too often brings worldliness into religious life, and (in common with most Englishmen) they have an instinctive distrust of that type that is associated with Jesuitism. But they must not be blind to their own failings, nor must they overlook the fact that their forefathers had the defects of their qualities. Puritanism (as Kingsley reminded us) has exercised a tremendous influence on the social development of the English people, but without doubt it has dulled the joy of life, that *joie de vivre* that ought to be the birthright of everyone, and is the peculiar heritage of the Christian. The modern Christian sees no fundamental reason why the Englishman should "take his pleasures sadly"; on the contrary, he believes that God meant us to take serious things seriously, but happy things happily, sad things bravely and all things hopefully. Humour, in short, has its place in religion as well as self-denial; not the same place, but both have a place in the same scheme.

Liberal Evangelicals then adhere to the synthetic or comprehensive outlook on life, they believe that social activities are factors in a spiritual conception of it; indeed they are certain that a spiritual personality cannot adequately be developed where social activities are denied it. On that fundamental conception of life they take their stand, on that basis they are prepared to formulate a policy that will use the world and not abuse it, that will allow full force to the fact that we must be "in the world" yet not "of it." In short, they believe that the true idea of separation must include the further truth that life is a synthesis and not a series of sections isolated one from another.

WHERE ALL EVANGELICALS AGREE

There are therefore two theories of life among Evangelicals, one held by those who look at it from the old standpoint, the other held by those who believe that in modern times experience has shown us a larger and truer vision. For convenience they may be called the "isolation" and the "comprehension" theories. Both are of course at one on the fundamental facts of the Life and Death of Christ as the basis of all Christian experience. It is well to make clear, however, that on practical issues both theorists also agree on two points.

(a) *That there is a vital difference between the "God" and the "no-God" method of living.*—Religious people are in practice those who recognise God in the affairs of ordinary life, and "worldly" people are those who in practice do not. In each case there may be a subconscious knowledge of Him, but in the former it constantly emerges into the centre of conscious thought, while in the latter it seldom, if ever, gets beyond the margin. On such a truth as this both types of Evangelical people can unite heartily and their combined testimony to the fact is greatly needed at the present day.

(b) *That there is grave danger in the present breaking down of social conventions.*—It is surely impossible to watch the rising generation without being struck by the splendid type we are producing, and at the same time the extraordinary difficulty to which it is exposed. Modern young people are strong and self-reliant, religious in their own way, out for reality and self-expression at all costs. But *it is the cost that gives us pause.* Self-expression in the immature stages may become mere self-opinionation, with an unwillingness to heed advice or

guidance. Reality which is vital to development becomes too often a sweeping away of that conventional reticence which at least safeguarded modesty, and an analysing of the elemental facts of existence, naked and unashamed. No one could desire to rob them of that knowledge which is essential to life, and which their forefathers denied them by a "conspiracy of silence." But when this natural desire is exploited by amusement caterers, until cinema, drama, novel, and even the broadcasted playlet reek with the mal-odour of the "infernal triangle" of husband, wife and lover—when all this is exploited *ad nauseam*, it is time to think furiously about the future.

The question, however, that emerges is this: Which attitude on the part of the religious world is going to improve matters, the old policy of "separation" from theatre, cinema, and novel, or the new policy of "sympathetic understanding," which seeks to mobilise the rising manhood and womanhood to resist the evil that is allowed to enter these things? Difficult though it be to purify commercially organised entertainments, a sympathetic Christian public opinion could do much, while a religious world "isolated" from it altogether can do little or nothing. For that reason many of the younger clergy and others have been seriously attempting a change to a more positive policy in relation to public amusement.¹ They feel that the old attitude may have helped the 5 per cent., but it left the 95 per cent. to its own (or its exploiter's) devices. The 95 per cent. just as much as the others are souls for whom Christ died, and Modern Evangelicals deem it to be their duty to try to win them to His service.

¹ Cp. *Recreations and Amusements*, by Canon T. Guy Rogers (Anglican Evangelical Group Movement Pamphlets, Hodder and Stoughton).

THE "MODERN" IDEA OF SEPARATION

The working out of this policy demands that our methods be positive as well as negative, indeed positive rather than negative. Liberal Evangelicals therefore would desire to call men and women to the service of the Master on a basis of

I. *Comprehension and not merely Isolation*

They know that there is a distinction between the Church and the world, but they want to press as many as possible into the Church. They know that there is a differential value in the spiritual, mental, and physical phases of human life, but they want to press as many phases as possible inside the sweep of the life of God. They are not unmindful of the fact that in this era, as in others, God is "taking out" a people for His name, but they believe that in the word *ecclesia* the "assembly" idea is even more germane than that of the mere "calling out." Indeed they believe that the statement as to the "taking out" in this age (Acts xv. 14) relates not to any fixed "theological" fact in the divine plan, but rather to the psychological fact in human nature, that, while "God willeth all men to be saved," man in his self-will too often "willeth" otherwise. Their policy, therefore, as preachers is not to start with the idea that only a select few, who say "shibboleth" in their conventional intonation, are to be saved, but that, given the opportunity, every single soul on earth could be saved, if they would. That is theologically our position, one of comprehension and not of isolation, "separating" as many as possible from the "corruption that is in the world," and gathering them into the Church of Christ. As regards the practical aspects we try to be consistent, and to "save" as many

phases of life's interests and activities as possible. It is no joy to us to hear a man relate how many items he has "given up," how little interest he now takes in the ordinary interests of his fellows. That to us only means that religion has—for him—diminished the sum total of life's fulness, and isolated his personal influence from its duty as a factor in the elevation of humanity.

We stand, then, for a positive policy of Comprehension, enlarging the Kingdom of Heaven by every single one who "willeth to be saved" and enriching the Christian life, when one is in, by every single gift that God has given us which can be rescued from the abuse that is too prevalent elsewhere.

So "separation" becomes synthetic when it draws the line not perpendicularly but horizontally; when we do not cut ourselves off into isolated groups but raise ourselves from lower to higher levels by the force of our spiritual distinctiveness, and raise as many others as we can, by the power of our spiritual influence.

Again when we come to the practical working out of our Christian calling we believe that Separation means a policy of

2. Discrimination, and not merely Denunciation

Sweeping generalisations about things being "worldly" leave people nowadays quite cold. They cannot believe that in human society everything is either all black or all white; they recognise, sorrowfully enough, that there is a good deal of grey. If that be so, then we must teach our young people to analyse the grey, to discriminate between the thing and the evil in the thing, between the use and the abuse of it in society.

To come to specific details. Personally the writer has had no occasion to utilise dancing, or whist drives, or

Bridge competitions in parochial work, and he has no desire whatever to use them as money-raising efforts for Church purposes. But that is not the point. What has done harm has been the general attitude of certain types of religious people who denounced incontinently every form of dancing and every form of card playing, as if there were no distinctions to be made. Long before these forms of recreation came into the sphere of parochial activity they were denounced in relation to society at large. "No Christian," we were told, could possibly attend, still less enjoy the dance or the whist drive. Again, "no Christian" could be seen in a theatre or be known to read a novel. Even the presenting of Shakespeare and Grand Opera was tabooed in the name of Christ. Indeed it was further asserted that when a man came to love Christ, the interest he had in these things at once vanished.

Now the rising generation is challenging us as to the truth of all this and as to the reasons for it, if it be true. They no longer accept sweeping generalisations or the argument of the "thin end" of that wedge which has done duty for so long. They want to know, Why do you denounce one form of exercise and patronise another? Is the moral value of tennis all good, and the moral value of dancing all evil? The modern young person regards dancing as one form of exercise suitable for indoors and tennis as another form suitable for out of doors. Has religion any authority for patronising the one and denouncing the other? If so, we must be prepared to state it. Prejudice can of course say that one is moral and the other suggestive, sensual and so on. But is it wholly true? Or prudence may assert that dancing can so easily be abused, and become lascivious. It can, and in certain cases it does; but the remedy is judicious

discrimination rather than wholesale denunciation, for there are many good godly people who have danced for years without an evil thought ever entering into their minds.

And what of the Theatre, which has been traditionally taboo, and regarded as unworthy of a Christian? Well, much of it is stupid and superficial; but is it all evil, is it always evil, is it altogether evil? Even if it were, the modern generation would ask, Why is it so evil? Is it because the dramatic instinct was implanted in man by the devil, or is it because the religious world has too largely withdrawn its influence for good from it? Or again, are cards really the "devil's pictures"? Is the card-playing of the fast club to be bracketed with the domestic rubber or the game of patience? Is the whist drive with prizes at a "social evening" to be swept into the same category as the gambling of a night club?

In all these matters what the young people of to-day resent is not the warning as to dangers lying therein, but the wholesale indiscriminate denunciation of items that have only a superficial resemblance. What is needed therefore, is discrimination, the spiritual penetration that will "draw the line," not because of convention or tradition, but because it senses the distinction between a thing that is wrong and a thing that is wrongly engaged in, because it is out to develop whatever is good in it, and to abolish whatever is evil. That is discrimination, a doctrine of separation which separates use from abuse, and then puts its positive weight on the side of the using.

As a matter of fact, this is just what every religious person does in certain other matters. The daily paper, for instance. Much of it is necessary for an intelligent knowledge of human activities, but many columns are

full of matter which is neither inspiring nor essential to life. Surely the Christian makes a point of discriminating between the ordinary news and unsavoury divorce reports. The tea party is another instance. It would be considered as going too far if Christian people ostracised tea parties, yet gossip and unkind criticism too often disfigure them. The Christian, of course, exercises a healthy discrimination, avoiding the elements that are unsound, but enjoying, quite rightly, the healthy social fellowship that is, generally speaking, afforded by such gatherings. All we ask is that Christian people should be consistent, that they be ready to avoid conventional estimates, and exercise a spirit of penetration in regard to things that differ. If all religious people would thus discriminate instead of denounce, and would bring their collective influence to bear on the raising of the tone of public entertainment, they might do a work of incalculable value for the rising generation. It is a policy that is at least worth attempting.

A third point in the true interpretation of separation follows and it goes deeper than either of the others. Modern Evangelicals believe that in dealing with human instincts the only method ultimately successful is

3. *Sublimation, and not merely Repression*

Every psychologist warns us of the danger of repression merely as such, the difficulty being that the repressing of instincts may lead to morbid processes in the unconscious mind which show their effects in misconduct. Yet both the Christian Faith and our human experience teach us that for personal efficiency self-denial is essential. How are these to be reconciled? Surely in the sublimation of the lower to the higher, transmuting the baser desire into the nobler ideal, directing the natural instinct into the

moral activity. Thus social ambition can be transformed into social service, and merely passionate love into motherhood, or more generally into the wish to help humanity. St. Paul was a sound psychologist when he gave the double precept—"Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." For this we Christians have a standard to aim at and a power with which to reach it such as is grander than anything mere psychology can suggest. To us the highest is not a varying concept of human excellence, but the Christ who is "the Image of the invisible God." To us as Christians the normal reactions to experience of human thought, emotion, and will are the machinery by which the Spirit of Christ works. Through them the "power of the Holy Ghost" dominates our being, the dynamic of Deity Itself indwells and interpenetrates our whole personality.

How much we have missed by not seeing hitherto that the true separation is the difference between the sublimated instincts and the natural ones, that the whole trend of Christ's teaching was to get that difference accentuated in the Church and therefore active in the world. We have been overlooking the best aspect of our God-given mission to humanity by so often putting the emphasis in the wrong place. We are indeed to be the "light of the world" and the "salt of the earth," but many have been so preoccupied with guarding the clarity of the light that they have prevented it from adequately illuminating the darkness. They have been so careful about maintaining the savour of the salt, that they have been all too oblivious of the task of purifying the corruption. The one exception has, of course, been Missionary work; here this "isolation" view of separation has sent hundreds of consecrated people to the mission field. But when

they got there, the view in question made them concentrate on the saving of "souls"; forgetful of the fact that educational and other agencies are also essential; for unless the whole social environment is also raised to higher levels, the soul immersed therein will have little chance of true development. Synthesis, that is, the comprehensive view of life, demands the saving of the whole man in his whole environment, and this includes the regeneration of his being, the sublimation of his instincts and the purification of his surroundings as part of the programme of Christianity.

A SUMMARY OF OUR VIEWS

To sum up. Modern Evangelicalism stands as strongly as its forefathers stood for personal holiness and spiritual life. It recognises clearly and emphasises strongly that the world can only be uplifted by the Church being distinctive and not accommodating, by the fact that she continually witnesses to the presence of the Spirit of Christ. But modern Evangelicalism, true to its historic origin, claims a truly Christian liberty. It takes its stand against merely conventional interpretations of what is the "Church" and what is the "world," and it asserts as a positive principle that "God giveth us richly all things to enjoy" and that there may be an element of goodness even in things that are stained with evil. It refuses entirely to erect conventional barriers against artificial "sins," and it stresses the right of private judgment against traditional interpretations of them. Finally it claims all life as from God, the whole man and his whole activities as the object of Redemptive Love, the whole world as rightfully belonging to its Creator and Lord. However much it may be forced to recognise that

the world lies temporarily "in the wicked one," it regards that as a challenge and a call, in response to which it will use every effort available under God to bring the world back to its true allegiance.

GEORGE BUCHANAN.

XI

THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

THERE is really but one fundamental problem, running, like a Wagnerian *motif*, through every part of the subject-matter of life. The philosopher may call it that of the One and the Many; the metaphysician that of Spirit and Matter; the moralist that of the Ideal and the Actual; the theologian that of the Church and the World. Whatever the selected angle of approach, however discriminating the distinctions established, the discussion always ends in an *impasse*. Why? Because life is not only larger than logic but built on lines which logic defies. Thus, law is of the essence of life; but it never reaches a four-square finality. Rhythm and balance run right through Nature; but symmetry and equilibrium not only are never achieved, but seem to be definitely avoided. In spite of the practical conveniences of a working dualism—the characteristic framework of logic—thought and action alike are continually headed back to the fact that life, like God, is *one* by the very results of trying to forget it.

Hence those recurrent crises in human evolution which, once over, form the chief interest of history, but are such a trial and even torment to those who have to live through them. The perpetual reappearance of "modernisms," each more far-reaching than the last, each claiming to represent new truth and, in its name, to question the old, is no small part of the sword which Christ said He came to send. Yet, looking back, we can

surely see that only so can His Spirit lead men on "into Truth as a whole," and vindicate the superiority of the Eternal Vision to the distinctions and antitheses of time. But arrogance in the apostles of the new light is as misplaced as obstinacy in those of the old. For, in the very nature of the recurrent process, each age, by expressing its vision, is forced to define and so to limit it: and so "the new doctrine" is involved in its turn in the universal doom of transience.

"The letter fails, and systems fall,
And every symbol wanes;
The Spirit over-brooding all,
Eternal Love, remains."¹

So it is "the heart," not the mind, that "makes the theologian." Religious truth is best learned in the atmosphere and by the method of love, which is least patient of definition and exclusion. Those whom later ages, at any rate, hail as authentic bringers of the light are seldom those who have dogmatised about it. Even in a practical age there is a significant bias in favour of the artist and poet as against the professor: and for the surest spiritual teaching men look not to the doctors but to the saints.

I

In the light of this little philosophy of history it is easy to understand the controversy out of which this book arises, and to recognise that the lack of finality and dogmatic precision in the standpoint which it seeks to explain may be more of a merit than a fault. It also possibly suggests why the difference between the older Evangelicalism and the new should extend even into the field of practical work—the subject of the present essay

¹ Whittier.

—though it is here that they might be expected to be closest together. Even those who are far more seriously divided can combine much more easily in work for Christ than in stating what they believe about Him. In face of the tragic wrongness of things as they are, “circumcision and uncircumcision” cease to bulk so large, and what counts is “faith finding active self-expression through love.”¹ Yet it is precisely in the most characteristic sphere of Evangelical work, Foreign Missions, that the line of cleavage between the two schools has been most emphasised in the public eye. Hence, largely, the need for treating this subject at all and for the present *prolegomena* to it.

Be it understood that Liberal Evangelicals, as such, do not claim to go out to the daily battles of the faith with any particular colours flying or with any distinctive methods or results in conscious view. Still less would any of us claim either that we have the best notions of how each “front” in Christ’s battle should be manned or that we are equally successful upon all of them. We are free and ready to admit that, in certain directions, the one great end may best be served by methods which, through force of temperament or tradition, are not congenial to ourselves. All this is involved in our claim to be “Liberals”; while, upon the “Catholic” side of us—and “Liberal Evangelical,” remember, is only an epithet, “Churchman” being the substantive understood—our face is naturally set towards a synthesis which will couple together all these sundered excellences and put each special gift at the service of all.

It is in this “synthetic” outlook that the newer Evangelicalism differs, perhaps, most markedly from the old: and the divergence has history as well as philosophy

¹ πῶς δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη.—Galatians v. 6.

behind it. The first Evangelicals, children of the matter-of-fact eighteenth century, born into a world in which abuses were legion and religious effort almost *nil*, while philosophy was, on the whole, no help to what they regarded as vital religion, based their scheme of life and work on a fairly thorough-going dualism, with the resolution of which they did not much concern themselves. The philosophical difficulty was, indeed, forestalled by the almost arbitrary transcendence with which they invested their conception of God, relying mainly upon the Old Testament theology. God (so to speak) instead of being identified with "the Good," the ideal of the moral consciousness, transcended and could, if it came to that, override it. When the inspired record of God's acts—such, for instance, as the vengeance on the Amalekites or on Uzzah—came into conflict with the conscience of a Christian, the latter was trained to give way. This was part of "giving God the honour due unto His Name"; while to have criticised the sacred records as possibly misrepresenting Him would have been to cast doubt upon His Word. And, since the early Evangelical did not usually philosophise, the fallacy of it did not strike him.¹

For the practical purposes of the moment no doubt

¹ *i.e.*, the fact that God's "Name" is His character, as revealed in Jesus Christ, and therefore cannot be "honoured" by acquiescence in any view of Him which involves separating "God" and "Good":

"For nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me."

Similarly the moral consciousness of the Christian is meant to be itself a revelation of "the mind of the Spirit" and so of the character of God: and "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven" is, on our Lord's showing, "greater than" the prophets who culminated in John, in the sense of knowing more about God.

this made for efficiency. "A single eye to God's glory," as then understood, meant a tolerably simple programme: for God and the world were more sharply divided both in theory and in fact, and there was a clearer call for the puritan attitude. The early Evangelical stood four-square for the One against the Many, the Spiritual against the Material, and, in so far as he could identify himself with the Church of his day, for the Church against the World. His very narrowness gave him a soldier's concentration; and this was the secret of his victories every time.

But it also led to later losses. For thought moved on, and the Evangelical, not being interested in its movements, kept his place. The pendulum swung again towards synthesis: towards a new recognition of the One *in* the Many (*i. e.* pantheism rather than deism), a new sense of the interactions of spirit and matter, a new realisation that, in this life, there can be no clear frontier between Church and World. But the Evangelical still planned his spiritual warfare on the old, convenient, dualistic lines, with every act labelled either right or wrong and the whole territory of life allotted to either God or the devil. The moral consciousness of mankind underwent a great rebirth, and began to see, with gradually clearing vision,

"The mystery, dimly understood,
That love of God is love of Good,
And to be saved is only this,
Salvation from our selfishness." ¹

In so far as orthodoxy still placed, or seemed to place, God above Good, instead of boldly identifying them, the new world swung away from the Churches. In some directions the "Catholic" revival met the new instincts:

¹ Whittier.

and Catholic orthodoxy, just because it is not concentrated upon so narrow a terrain as the Evangelical, has always found it easier to adjust itself to new demands. The Evangelicals, in so far as they clung to their eighteenth-century positions, had to be content with more and more restricted victories over the world. Those they won, moreover, tended to be ever more dearly purchased in proportion as they were, from the Evangelical point of view, complete. For this involved pressing the whole personality of the convert into a groove in which the real life of his day was becoming less and less able to flow; and then the growing cleavage between themselves and their contemporaries was taken as evidence that their way, the narrow one, must be right.

True it is that "separation from the world" does lead to deeper spiritual energies, in so far as the positive side of the process, union with God, is really achieved. But there is a point at which such separation begins to defeat its own end. For what is the good of spiritual power if contact with humanity be broken? And if the Divine Reservoir of the power, Himself the Lover of all souls, is not separate from but bound up in the whole human process—and this our Lord emphatically asserts—then any loss of the wider human sympathies means a less true union with God Himself as well as lost opportunities of service. Here again "the heart makes the theologian," and "loving one's brother" is a condition not only of loving but of knowing God. To cut oneself off from human contacts is apt to lead to breaking the Second Commandment unawares.

It is a growing consciousness of these difficulties, practical and spiritual at once, which has led the younger school of Evangelicals to a certain measure of revolt in the name of the *Zeitgeist*, which, on our own doctrinal

premisses, we cannot but believe to be one manifestation of the Spirit of God. We admit the risks of such a faith, and the permanent need of "proving the spirits." But we claim that such a faith is not in itself un-Christian; nay, that, in its very riskiness, it may be the nearer to the mind of Christ. And what in effect we seek to do, in our contribution to the Church's task of overcoming the world, is to try the effect of a new Evangelicalism, which, by being Liberal, shall prove to be Catholic as well. We do not want to forget that "the world" must always be, in some sense, the enemy, and that therefore the secret of victory must lie in "separation unto God." But we do want to assert the exhilarating claim that "all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas"—(note the implied synthesis of the three divergent traditions of churchmanship, "Low" and "Broad" and "High")—"or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." ¹

"Let us not always say,
 'Spite of this flesh, to-day
 I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole.'
 As the bird wings and sings,
 Let us cry, 'All good things
 Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more now than flesh helps soul.' " ²

Yet, for all that the younger school may rebel against what seems to us the restricted world-view, and consequently restricted strategy, of the older, it is as Evangelicals that we still go forth to war. As such we know and confess that true advance must be measured not by the scope of our battle-front or the variety of our equipment, but by the victories won, retained, and followed up. Now as in our fathers' days genuine

¹ 1 Corinthians iii. 21-23.

² Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

victories only can be gained by spiritual weapons grasped by spiritual men. In that sense we want to be Evangelicals of the deepest dye. To the credit of the older Evangelicalism stand some monumental victories which can be ascribed to nothing but the old Evangelical spirit. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts":¹ the text was not without reason often upon the lips of that generation. If to-day we plead for wider "diversities of operations," we know that, without "the same Spirit," their results will only disappoint.

II

Let me illustrate this abstract discussion by glancing at two concrete instances of the older Evangelical philanthropy—the word is convenient rather than correct—which show at once its strength and its weakness: I mean two men who would rank high in any list of benefactors of their kind who were forces in politics just because they were men of God—William Wilberforce and the great Lord Shaftesbury. To those who were accustomed to view the conqueror of the Slave Trade in the traditional rose-coloured way the more objective view of him and his Evangelical contemporaries given in Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's well-known book, *The Town Labourer*, came as a shock and a surprise. In so far as that able study did Wilberforce's religion less than justice, amends have been made in the same writers' later *Life of Lord Shaftesbury*, which recognises its subject's religion as the key to his amazing success, and calls him "one of the guiding forces in the reconstruction of English life," who "by sheer persistence shamed his age out of its principles."²

¹ Zechariah iv. 6.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

A faith which won such victories over the world can never be derided as "otherworldly." Yet it was the detachment of these two great Evangelicals from a world which each had had at his feet, and spurned, which gave them their dogged perseverance. With a keener sensitiveness to their whole environment, their impact upon it at the points chosen would have been less sure. Their narrowness was their strength.

But, for all that, it was avenged by a "blindness in part" which cut them off from what might have been even more creative service. And that is the point for our present argument. Thus, though it is with Christian humanitarianism that the world associates their names, they were quite out of touch with the humanitarian movement of their time. Wilberforce and his friends regarded it with hostility: and when Shaftesbury, at a later day, commented on the social passion of Dickens, all he could bring himself to say was that "he may have been, in God's singular and unfathomable goodness, as much a servant of the Most High as the pagan Naaman, by whom the Lord gave deliverance unto Syria."¹ Wilberforce was cramped by the post-Revolution mentality of the propertied classes, which "tended to regard Christianity as only one of the sanctions of the existing order";² Shaftesbury by the individualism which overtook the Evangelicals in proportion as they "fed not on the advancing hours." "His religion taught him to love and pity men, but it did not teach him the spirit of fellowship, and he practised in life an individualism as isolating as the individualism that Bentham preached."³ The result was that neither, for all his passion of service,

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 272 n.

² *The Town Labourer*, p. 231.

³ *Lord Shaftesbury*, p. 274.

was able to do what, in the light of the sequel, the Church of his day should have tried to do. They fought splendid battles, but seemed unconscious of the campaigns of which these battles were part. It was in Wilberforce's day that those social and economic chains were being forged which the world is convulsively trying to break to-day. "Amid all the conquests over nature that gave its triumphs to the Industrial Revolution, the soul of man was passing into a colder exile; for in this new world, with all its wealth and promise and its wide horizon of mystery and hope, the spirit of fellowship was dead."¹ Lord Shaftesbury did much to ease the pressure of the new chains upon individuals, and carried his religion far into politics. But he had not "the spirit of fellowship," and could not co-operate with any who did not accept his own view of truth, such as Maurice, Kingsley, and their friends. And so the Christian Socialists (as Mr. and Mrs. Hammond say) proved but a phase, through lack of that representation and leadership in Parliament which he could have given them; while he, with his assured position of leadership, lived and died a lonely man. What might not a Wilberforce have done who had been capable (say) of a Christian sympathy with Shelley, or a Shaftesbury who, instead of studying and recording himself in his Diary, had been able to warm to Dickens and Browning, and read, along with his Bible, the signs of the times!

III

To profit by such a retrospect, reverent although regretful, is what the Liberal Evangelical is fain to do. Once more "a new world" opens around us, "with its

¹ *The Town Labourer*, p. 329.

wide horizons of mystery and hope." If the early Evangelicals limited their achievements by planning battles instead of campaigns, can we embark on a wider warfare?

First, however, is it worth while planning a campaign at all? Are we meant to, and is there time? Is it not rather the Church's task to pluck brands individually from the burning, to wait for her Lord, and (if anything) to welcome the growth of darkness as a sign that His return is near?

The adventism so prevalent to-day is, of course, a dualistic pessimism in disguise, and rests partly on emotions and instincts natural to times of special strain, partly on what must be regarded as an unhistorical use of some passages of the Bible, while others, quite as characteristic, are ignored. On the exact meaning of the Second Coming of Christ, and its relation to the Final Judgment, Christians have been and will be divided. This is not the place for a discussion of it: nor need the subject be referred to, but that many earnest Christians to-day not merely so believe in the Coming as imminent that other aspects of Christ's gospel hardly interest them at all, but think it their duty to oppose constructive plans for His kingdom on earth which seem to doubt what to them is certain.

Thus to most of us the League of Nations represents a natural stage towards what we mean by the kingdom of God on earth. It offers at least a framework for human brotherhood, though that brotherhood can only be achieved in proportion as God is really treated as the Father of all. Hence we hold it our duty to support the League, while emphasising that its success must depend on the spread of the Christian spirit—that is, on the work of the Spirit of God. But the strict adventist has no

use for the League. For we are not to expect peace on earth, but "wars and rumours of wars" to the end: and the Bible prophecies of the latter days do not indicate any such solution. To support the League, therefore, is to misunderstand and even resist God's plan.

This attitude, of course, cuts the nerve of every kind of world-service that goes beyond the saving of souls in the narrow sense: and that is why we have to refer to it. At least we may claim, from what we know of our Lord's mind, that He cannot have meant "the hope of His coming" to limit our ambitions for the establishment, by our own service, of His kingdom on earth, or to discourage long views in making our plans. One of the amazing facts of to-day is the big results of relatively small efforts by the Church—the rich return, for instance, in the spread of Christian ideals, from a forward movement in Foreign Missions begun but a century ago and even still supported by barely one so-called Christian in fifty. Looking back, we see that the results of this effort might have been vastly greater if the Church had had from the first a strategic mind and a statesmanlike policy behind its missionary effort, such as it is trying to develop to-day. Surely, then, it is our duty to be far-sighted in our planning now? Even if the Coming of Christ, in the strictest adventist sense, is going to interrupt the world-process shortly, we shall be not the more but the less "ashamed before Him at His coming" if we have tried to handle His widest interests with the same broad foresight as we give to our own.

IV

In one direction, at any rate, Evangelical Churchmen have always practised the wider strategy, though not always with consciously strategic minds: and that is in their emphasis on Foreign Missions as the primary duty of the Church. True, it is precisely in the most strictly Evangelical quarters that missionary efforts not directly aimed at individual conversions have been frowned upon, and educational missions especially undervalued. But the fact remains that the missionary expansion of the last hundred years, however motivated, stands now as the most creative and far-reaching stroke of Christian policy, the biggest contribution of the Church towards solving the biggest problem of the world. If that brotherhood of nations, which events have shown to be essential if humanity is to survive, is also seen to be humanly possible, and so a reasonable aim of statesmanship, this is because Christian Missions, on however small a scale, have proved that in Christ men have already a centre of unity, in His teaching a universal basis for valid international law, and in His Spirit the guarantee of an international conscience behind it. And in Christian Missions it is the Evangelicals who have, admittedly, led the van.

But the moral is that we must do more, and better, in the same line. The Christian view of human personality itself involves the unity of mankind: a spiritual unity, that which binds persons into one, like that of the Godhead Itself.¹ And now the very stress of events demands that such a unity be quickly achieved, before

¹ Cp. St. John xvii. 22, 23: "That they may be a unity even as we are a Unity: I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one."

the frictions set up by ever closer economic relationships, divorced from spiritual sympathies, result in an all-destroying conflict. Peace, in other words, is seen to be bound up with the process which the New Testament describes as "baptizing all nations into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." If the old individualistic passion for souls has waned, as a motive for saving the heathen, a new sense of and passion for human solidarity ought to be enough to take its place. If hell in the old sense no longer plays a large part in our motive, there is another hell ahead of this age the terror of which should quicken zeal. As in the war the armies learned from events new methods and ever wider strategies, so also must the Church: and as then those armies grew from a handful of professional soldiers to be the nation itself in arms, so the Church must re-fashion the Christian outlook till world-service, even unto death, shall seem not merely natural but desirable for every soldier of Jesus Christ. The preaching of His Gospel *everywhere* is now more plainly than ever the primary duty of His Church.

This, however, means a wider view of evangelisation and also of the mission-field. We have to hear the well-known words of Terence in the mouth of our Lord:

"I am a man: nought human alien is
To Me."

Such a movement as "Copec" represents an effort to give them effect. We are already far from the days when Lord Melbourne thought it monstrous that religion should "interfere with the private life of a gentleman": but we have a long way to go before we catch up with the New Testament. Is there anything in literature more daring than the words in which St. Paul denies

the finality of race, class, and sex as social barriers—a view which only the last ten years have begun to understand—and then proclaims the ideal solidarity of all human kind in just such a formula as psychology is feeling after to-day? “As many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There is no room for Jew *versus* Greek, slave *versus* freeman, male *versus* female: for the whole of you are *one personality* (εἷς, not εἶς) in Christ Jesus.”¹ It means that in some of the most characteristic modern movements we ought to hear beating the wings of the Divine Spirit: and where that sound is heard, there is territory which His Church is bound to occupy.

Thus (to take but one self-evident instance) the Evangelical of to-day will add to his zeal for Foreign Missions an intelligent interest in foreign politics, and read his newspaper (first having chosen a real one) with as spiritual an eye as his Bible. He will feel in face of (say) the French occupation of the Ruhr, or the events in the East which led to the abandonment of Armenia, the massacre at Smyrna, and the retrograde Treaty of Lausanne, the same emotions as stirred up his father against the opium traffic in China or his grandfather against such a practice as *suttee*. And he will realise that there may be idolatries even more offensive to God and degrading to man than those of Central Africa or the South Seas: the cult, let us say, of silk-hatted Mammon or tin-helmeted Moloch—the deifying of “Reparations” or “Security”—or that “servitude to Freedom’s Name” which is the main result of setting up so many new altars to “the principle of self-determination.”

The same will apply to the sphere of home politics,

¹ Galatians iii. 27–28.

and (for instance) oblige us to seek "the word of the Lord" in trade disputes or social abuses, and, if it is given to us, to proclaim it. And so, as bit by bit we see and reveal the relevance of Christ to all things, "the world" will be "our parish" in a new sense: not as a vast preserve of souls to be saved, but as a revolted kingdom to be won back for its king.

V

That this vastly enlarges our task is obvious. Is there any hope of being equal to it? Four principles must guide the attempt, though I can only treat of them briefly, relating them in particular to the Evangelical tradition.

1. First, as we repudiate individualism in our view of our work, so let us shed it in contemplating the worker. For service on the scale the times demand, fellowship is the only possible starting-point; and both the objective and the agent must always be taken *in their context*. Just as we now recognise that there is no real saving of souls in isolation—you must either redeem at the same time some little patch of their environment, or surround them with a new environment as a non-conducting screen between the "new creature" and its former world: which in practice means providing some sort of Christian fellowship—so we must also grant that the individual in isolation is never the ideal saviour. In other words, even when the objective is the saving of an individual, you must approach him not as yourself only but in the context of "the Church," supported by the fellowship of the like-minded; and what you approach will not be for you an individual only but a bit of "the kingdom that we seek."

Follow up this thought, and the sort of experience which supports it, and you will see why the ideal fellowship for this purpose must be that not of a "sect" but of "the Catholic Church." For success in any impact of person upon person (and that is the standard unit of all "Church extension") depends on evoking from a unique individual just that reaction to the many-sided appeal of Jesus Christ which is most natural to him. So, the more the worker realises his own limitations, the more will he shrink from imposing himself upon that other, and feel the need of a human context and complement to broaden and mellow his presentation of Christ. And this can only come from fellowship not simply with those who see eye to eye with him—the essence of a "sect"—but with that variety (and even contrast) in unity which is one note of the Catholic Church.

It is significant that the group-method in Christian work and thought is coming more and more into vogue, and that the ideal group is recognised as one in which contrasted outlooks can really combine. Such a group as that (say) which produced "The Grey Book" as a contribution to Prayer Book Revision is an illustration of this.

2. In a work so vast, with the frontiers of Church and world so impossible to trace in detail, we must abandon the dualism which sets "sacred" and "secular" rigidly apart, and make the widest use of so-called "secular" means for furthering the kingdom of God: always provided that the end be not forgotten in the means, and that the result is some triumph of the spiritual. Here again the "Copec" findings will help us, and General Elections, municipal politics, company meetings, business relations, trade disputes, even the social occupations of leisure, provide opportunities for drawing from

its scabbard "the sword of the Lord." Nothing, certainly, will do more to raise the prestige of the Church and so make its verdicts count in shaping public opinion than an obvious passion for the fullest Christian morality. And this can only reveal itself in individual Christians mixing with the world. It is in the ordinary ways of life far more than in the specialised fields which the term suggests that "Christian workers" are needed to-day. Nor is a real rediscovery of "the Church" as the highest form of human fellowship more urgently needed for any purpose than to provide background, stimulus, and companionship for those who thus go out to solitary combat with the world.

3. At the same time, the need for specialised Church work and workers will not contract but grow as we face our task in the bigger perspective. True, one would like to feel it would mean less machinery: but certainly more methods will be involved, and a correspondingly greater variety of helpers. I am not sure but that, along with the narrower sense of Christian work, we should do well to scrap, or send to Madame Tussaud, the traditional model of "the Christian Worker," so far as he or she has become "a type." For "types" are out of favour generally: and at least in this new stress upon individuality the mind of to-day is surely not so far from the mind of Christ. That, however, comes rather under our fourth head. Its relevance here is this, that, without the elasticity and independence which come from being, first and foremost, oneself, and which wilt under any form of standardisation, the Church will fail to realise the vast range of experimentation which the conditions of her task demand. The discovery of new methods and the finding of time to develop them must depend on a large scrapping of the old. All kinds of problems in this

field await the collective verdict of the Church : to take but one, the use and abuse of " broadcasted religion." But that verdict can only be reached as the result of manifold individual experience : and to get that experience experiment is first required—experiment prompted by the same enterprise as, in the commercial world, leads at once to the economic exploitation of any new scientific discovery. Nor will the modern Church refuse to trust that, even if some new instrument offered us—such as the Film—is already tainted by abuse, our part is to see whether it cannot be rescued rather than leave it in the devil's arsenal.

VI

But the fourth and most crucial condition of success underlies all the others, and must be taken by itself. I mean the multiplication—if possible, the mass production—of the right type of what, to avoid the conventional associations of " the Christian worker," I would call " the worker Christian " instead. And " worker " I should wish taken in the broadest possible sense. Not the obviousness of the process, but the value of the product is the true measure of work : and for Christian work " to be " is more than " to do." The greatest of all social influences is the sort of man whom the world (not necessarily the Church) calls " a saint " : and he is more often than not an unpractical person. " Not many things but much " ¹ is the formula of his life. He scores not by the intrinsic importance of his activities, but by the fact that his words and deeds are given from God. His method is inspiration rather than efficiency ;

¹ i. e. " *non multa, sed multum*," the exact force of which cannot be neatly given in English.

and his chief instrument is a life which "makes it easier for others to believe in God," and so, by increasing faith, enlarges the area of Divine action.

But of what sort is our modern saint to be? We have just implied a difference between the world's conception of sainthood and the Church's, and suggested that the former may be nearer the mark. "There is no appeal against the world at large."¹ Certainly the present age has little use for the type which, in the past, the Church has delighted to honour: or rather for that distortion of the far more human originals which conventional homage has produced and then, by imitation, perpetuated. Specialised fervour, alarming intensity, exceptional ways, a moral stature which keeps common men at a distance—these qualities do not in practice win the world. Above all, our worker Christian must be a real individual, not a type. In other words, he must be like the Jesus of the Gospels rather than the last of the Hebrew prophets.

An American writer asks why people are so often "more attractive in their days of careless good fellowship" than after they have "come to moral decision and attained ethical maturity." The same question lies behind Nietzsche's challenge to Christ, a question which the life of our day is pressing closely upon the Church. Unless we are prepared to deny altogether the value of æsthetic judgments, we cannot just say that the "attractiveness" of the more spontaneous life is a snare of the devil. It is a fact, and one which for multitudes has compelling value; and those who (like the Puritans) have tried to ignore it have always lost by doing so. The answer of the writer just quoted is much to the point for us. "The vagabond is not attractive because he has parted company with his conscience.

¹ "Securus judicat orbis terrarum."

He is attractive because there is something wonderfully spontaneous about his life. A virtuous man in the green-apple stage of his development is not unattractive because he is in earnest. He is unattractive because he is hard and self-conscious. There is something mathematical about his loyalty. He is always remembering the formula. There is no splendour of creative freedom about his life."¹ But in this he is palpably not Christ-like: so the charge lies not against Christ but against him. What he has to do is to "press on unto perfection," until he can "part company" not with his conscience, but with his self-consciousness, and combine in one real individual life "all the zest of Falstaff and all the earnestness of a Hebrew prophet."²

In practice, no doubt, this is more than life allows to all of us. There must always be those whose cross-bearing has to take the form of what, in effect, is self-mutilation for the kingdom of God.³ If Falstaff and Jeremiah cannot be combined, it is plainly Falstaff who must go. And yet the synthesis is the higher and more Christian ideal: and this ideal must be kept in view lest, by accepting any simplification as final, we end by wronging and robbing Christ. For the wider life should be the natural consequence of communion with Him Who is the Spirit of the Whole, but Who yet reveals Himself most fully in the infinitely various individualities of men. The true saint is the perfect social influence because he reflects both these qualities of the Divine. On the one hand he is more completely his individual self than the half-baked generality of persons. On the other, he is more completely in contact and sympathy with all the manifold works of God, since, being "in

¹ Lynn H. Hough, *Synthetic Christianity*, pp. 66-67.

² *Ibid.*

³ Cp. Matthew xix. 12.

Christ," he is organic to the whole of reality.¹ (Take such a life as that of St. Francis.) The sainthood that is needed to-day must bridge the gulf which man, not God, has made between genius and goodness, between the moral and the æsthetic sides of life. It must re-emphasise "the beauty of holiness," and remember that, to find beauty, we always go to Nature, which yet we recognise as the handiwork and self-expression of "the God of all grace." Nothing that is unnatural can be either beautiful or a true representation of God. "First that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual." St. Paul may not have meant it quite that way: but he would not quarrel with the application. The true spirituality is only the higher naturalness.

On the other hand, seeing what "Nature" means in man, such claims will have no antinomian consequences. To revert to a philosophical distinction mentioned at the very start, we are not letting in the Many at the expense of the One, or losing God in His multiform creation. The saint is at home everywhere—"organic to the whole of reality"—because his whole life is organic to God: because he is "in Christ," and Christ "in him." His true nature is that of his Father in heaven: and it

¹ My hand is "organic to" my arm, which in turn is "organic to" my body: *i. e.* there is a continuity between the life of the part and that of the whole to which it belongs as an "organ." My body is not "organic to" my physical environment: but my personality is to my spiritual and social context (*e. g.* a son is organic to the family he is born into). A Christian, as a member of Christ's Body, is "organic to" Christ: it is the continuity of the one Divine Life, emanating from the Head, flowing into the members, that creates the Body. And so, since Christ "is before all things, and in Him all things hold together," the same continuity of one Divine Life links every Christian with all reality. The manifestation of this universal kinship is commonly described as "genius" and regarded as exceptional. In a fully-developed Christianity it would be the rule.

is because his life-process is communion with Him that he is able (as the Greeks put it) "to be himself."¹ Hence, while at home throughout the kingdom of the real, he will be "about his Father's business" everywhere. To others, versatility, spontaneity, hilarity will be the notes of his behaviour: in himself he will all the time be saying, "Necessity is laid upon me; this one thing I do." And the spring of all he is and does will be a sense of mission, involving a daily taking up of the Cross; even though (in Samuel Rutherford's charming words) that cross, "fixed cannily" upon his back, will be unto him "such a burden as wings are unto a bird"—the key to full and free activity.

It is men and women with this overwhelming sense of mission, who yet will let it be not a barrier but a bridge between them and those to whom they are sent, that we need to ask of God to-day. And that only means Christians in our Lord's own sense. Their best work will be done by just "being themselves" through being "in Christ": sons and daughters of the God who is Love, at home with Him in all parts of His universe, suffering therefore with Him in all that denies or delays His kingdom, and, by so suffering, working also with Him to "renew the face of the earth." Their ministry will be principally to individuals, and consist above all, like Christ's, in giving themselves in love. Their motive (so far as they are conscious of it) will be neither moral exactly nor æsthetic, but something which blends and rises above both these partial views of the problem of evil. And so their handling of that problem will neither be selfish, like that of the mere lover of beauty, nor priggish, like that of the conventional saint. True sainthood, in other words, will be simply a genius for doing good.

¹ φύσιν ἔχειν.

VII.

There is a poem of Mr. W. B. Yeats which almost expresses the attitude which I am trying to describe—that of the Christian as the artist in goodness :

“ All things uncomely and broken,
all things worn out and old,
The cry of a child by the roadway,
the creak of a lumbering cart,
The heavy steps of the ploughman,
splashing the wintry mould,
Are wronging your image that blossoms
a rose in the deeps of my heart.

“ The wrong of unshapely things
is a wrong too great to be told ;
I hunger to build them anew
and sit on a green knoll apart,
With the earth and the sky and the water
remade, like a casket of gold
For my dreams of your image that blossoms
a rose in the deeps of my heart.”

True, the man who thinks in terms of goodness first might have chosen other samples of the evil and ugliness in the world that “ wrong ” the image in his heart—the image (in this case) of the Universal Christ, “ the meaning of all things that are.” But he will understand and share both the passion of the lover of beauty to shape such things anew, as the frame and setting of his vision, and his inability to enjoy the picture while the frame is tarnished or awry. His love of Christ will involve the many-sided Christian struggle to save the world. The campaign against evil will be for him a condition of retaining his faith.

But there is one word of the Irish poet which the artist in goodness would claim to change. The vindicator of beauty sees himself in his heaven sitting “ apart ” to enjoy his triumph, his vision, and his love. But the

vindicator of goodness can only enter upon all three in proportion as he shares them with others—in proportion as, like his Master, he “receives gifts for men; yea, even for his enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” His dream of the perfect Church includes the ransomed world: and the “green knoll” on which he will at once enjoy each stage of achievement and brace himself to attempt the next is that “green hill far away” which, for history as well as for religion, has superseded Delphi as “the navel of the earth.”

E. A. BURROUGHS.

XII

PRAYER

THE LARGE ROOM

WHEN writing the secret history of his soul, man gives his most definite emphasis to experiences which have led him into the large room. Among these experiences comes foremost the experience of communion with God. Though it comes foremost he will write it up in language which veils the intensity of the joy of communion: most probably he will use the word *Prayer*. The most tremendous moments are moments of prayer. Unfortunately there is a current use of the word which has made the mystic experience hard to be regarded as a real thing.

Of the groups of Christians using the word "prayer" one group may be said to understand and consequently to experience the *tremendous* in life. Other groups, though knowing all the ways and forms of prayer, not having an understanding of prayer, are shut in to mere expressions of prayer. For the understanding group there is the large room with frequent change of modes of prayer. If forms of prayer fail it does not matter; the companionship of prayer cannot fail. Not being limited to expressions of prayer, the understanding leaps up to the Father in a simple cry of "Abba," Father. When forms fail, the group without understanding is only the more shut in upon itself and ultimately abandons all effort to satisfy the longing for communion with God.

Love of the large room is characteristic of souls that are other-centred. Seeking first the tremendous King-

dom of God, they inherit mystic reality. Spiritual self-centredness in prayer knows no adventure. It succumbs to the morbid. The reality of communion with God is known primarily by its spaciousness—"which art in Heaven."

OF LIMITATIONS

There are none in the mystic life. Jesus said: "All things are possible," and "whatsoever you desire." Many lives are arrested in spiritual development by the limiting of prayer to some already known experience, instead of boldly trying to enter into the experiences of others or breaking new ground. To limit prayer life to a known experience is a sure way of paralysing the capacity of soul response. It is as often done unwittingly by those who have entered fully into the prayer of action, but cannot tolerate the prayer of quiet, as by those who find it a sacrifice to break away from meditative prayer. To make limitations is a temptation open to all men. Having found one sure way of prayer the temptation is to imagine that there is no other, with the result that devotional ruts are made in the heart. Tiredness of soul is inevitable. There must be no limitation, either of methods or ways, and certainly no limitation of power or expectancy. There is no end to the ways of God with men. A dozen different lives of prayer are not sufficient to fulfil the tremendous possibilities in communion with God.

Think how different saints find this link with God. Some find their communion with God through communion with a person who is both intimate and dear: others find communion in stern activity by obedience to such a command as "If ye love me, keep my commandments";

others make divine contact through beauty, either of Nature or of art or of music; and many there are who find communion in research work, as they seek to wrest the truth from starry heaven or rocky earth, from body of beast or from mind of man. Then there are the communings of the imagination, the upward stretchings of the will, the secret desires of the heart, and the earnest expressions for the good of others. There can be no complete statement of prayer ways, for there is no limitation to the function of prayer. It is as the Kingdom, the power and the glory—even for ever and ever.

OF EXHILARATION

Spiritual exhilaration is a natural outcome of the sense of possession. When the soul has grasped the possessiveness of the "our" in the "our Father," then exhilaration floods the soul. All's one. All are His. The whole team that forms the make-up of man is His, and all the faculties are given an innings, so that as one faculty is caught out or bowled out another takes its place. But if only the emotions or only the desires are encouraged to play for Him who made them all and desires to be loved with the mind and strength as well as with the heart, then the other elements within are fired with jealousy. All sorts of horrible things happen, such as the well-known reaction of emotional revivals or philosophical conferences, where there is no real exhilaration but only an ill fever. The exhilaration of being near to one's possessor with all one's faculties in tune is absolutely wholesome and yet almost mischievous;—mischievous, because it is so tantalising in that, whilst it certainly gives content, it also creates a craving for more. There is something here which in many ways is not unlike the

exhilaration that comes with companionship in healthy love. The suppliant must be himself and not a copy of some other, no matter how perfect that original may be. The suppliant is received for himself; his oddities, his weaknesses, his desires, and everything that goes to make up the individual. In Jesus' pictures of the exhilaration of prayer we see the Father desiring the reciprocation of His love, loving the individual with all the oddities of that individual, much as the mother loves the ugliness of the ugly duckling.

Again, as in the affairs of love, so in prayer, it is of no more value to discuss the problem of prayer at the outset of the experience of prayer, than to discuss the problem of love with the lover at the outset of the days of courtship. Possession with its wonderful exhilaration must come first, for it is in the assurance of possession that the problem loses its frown.

THE PARADOX

Of course there is a problem. Prayer is at once passion and action. It convicts me of worthlessness in my most high moments, and yet so regenerates me as to enable me to acclaim that there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. It impels me to assert my individuality whilst all the time I am abandoning myself to the Father of Jesus. It concentrates my whole being into an infinitesimal part of the innumerable company that makes up the Church, and at the same time it expands my soul to a receiving of the fulness of God. It digs deep into the foundations of my being the very while that it uplifts me to the highest reality that has gripped my soul. It seems to function only when in complete harmony with the fundamental laws of the universe, but whenever it

functions it fulfils those laws to such overflowing as to give it a character that seems to transcend all law. How this movement operates cannot be told, but in its operation we know there are set free principalities and powers which are not yet scientifically tabulated.

Prayer might be regarded as a purely human activity. Or, on the other hand, it might be regarded as solely a supernatural gift; either would be simple, but they would not satisfy human experience. If we can regard prayer as instinct with life and with God, yet limited by human willingness to adapt itself, to receive into itself all the marks of environment and so colour the life and give form to the Divine, then to regard prayer in this sense is admittedly paradoxical, it is baffling to the human mind, but it does satisfy human experience and makes the soul one with Jesus.

OF HALLOWING

All the best of all prayer experience is included in Christian Prayer. But Christian Prayer does not sanction much of what is rightly termed prayer in pre-Christian life, and therefore all Old Testament prayers have to be tested in practice by the Christ revelation of prayer.

To Jesus the Father was an absorbing passion. The Christian who desires to enter into the full joy of communion must share Jesus' passion for the Father. Jesus manifested a jealous regard for His Father's honour that is quite overlooked by people who almost limit the Deity to the second Person of the Trinity. Prayer can have no permanent attraction if He to whom prayer is offered is not considered in the praying. To find oneself actually in the presence of the Father is the most important discovery in prayer practice. It may be in a garden,

when we hold a simple flower and wonder at it, or on the wayside, when we listen to the tragic story of human woe and pity it. No matter where or how. Suddenly the touch comes and then we know we are at prayer. We are surprised. We are in the Presence. Such moments of eternity must not be abused. They must be lived to the fullest. Every faculty must be awakened and allowed to share the honour; then later when the experience has passed, all the faculties can co-operate to register the signs of this phenomenon. To trust to luck that this surprise experience will come again is to abuse the divine visitation. It must not be gloated over to the starving of habits, but rather marked, noted, registered, treasured, linked with its own peculiar fellowship, *related to the Father.*

This is Jesus' way of hallowing. In the Gospels He relates everything to the Father and in so doing enjoys a conscious sharing in the life of God. The sun is not spoken of by Jesus as God's sun, it is the Father's. The sparrows, the lilies, the grass, the children of the village and city are all linked to the Father in the mind of Jesus.

Hallowing is a difficult habit to develop, especially in an age that is given to furious thinking and violent activity; but if prayer is to have a chance, hallowing must be developed as a habit. Hallowing is the only spark that so sets thought to action that both burn and neither are consumed, but on the contrary evolve a new phenomenon of responsiveness, by which we ourselves become so related to the Father that it becomes true to say that enjoyment of God's creation is prayer; delight in man's aspiration is prayer; and desire for the best for fellow creatures is prayer, and more. In this hallowing is discovered the mighty joy, that all the while He whom we have been seeking, has been seeking us; in the act

of hallowing we, as it were, introduce ourselves to the charmed circle (I think the theological word for this experience would be "grace"). The whole man, mind, emotions and will having thus gained a known direction to the Father, there is generated within the soul an atmosphere something like that which we call the sense of sacredness in an old church. This atmosphere calls into action the emotion of wonder. By the full working of this emotion curiosity about prayer is purified (indeed all curiosity is purified), the imagination is set to work by an awe-inspired will, the dangerous temptation to make artificial efforts to create prayer has no chance, for in the act of wondering the creator and the creation are enjoyed as one. When the act is past, it is seen to have been a surer way to prayer than even the strongest resolve to pray. Wonder at the things before you. Relate them to the Father and so hallow His name.

THE URGE FOR PRAYER

As far as we can read, prayer is very old. It is one of the powers by which God links His creation with Himself throughout the ages. The desire to pray has been, and is, a kind of inward urge, perhaps the spiritual urge, certainly an urge that hungers for satisfaction. When thwarted of its true food, when it has not been allowed to reach up to prayer, when it has hunted through other faculties and emotions to find an outlet, when it has secured outlet without spiritual satisfaction, then there arises a state of unnatural soul orgy which creates dissatisfaction in prayer. There is ample evidence that the urge for the fulfilment of prayer vocation can deceive itself in this way. It can find release without achieving its purpose. Jesus gives the true way when He bids

His disciples link their prayer urge with their imagination and become creative towards fellowship. There is further ample evidence that when the urge is harnessed and directed to a spiritual goal in Christ it assumes the form of another power; it works within and gradually fascinates the moral being into co-operation with the divine. It burrows through unrealised faculties and discovers undreamt-of possibilities; it awakens dormant ideals and relates them all to the Father in Heaven. The prayer urge refuses to be content unless it is accepted, developed, adapted, delighted in and imparted; being a companionable thing, it refuses to be held in; it expands if used largely, for it is very generous and wide-embracing in its nature.

As we look at the prayer urge, wonder at the marvel, take it reverently into the grasp of every faculty, experiment with it, abandon self to its absorbing possibilities, then something happens and immediately, during a semi-conscious blankness, repressions are lifted. It is then that undreamt-of potentialities are set moving and the power of God is made manifest. Unexpectedly and awkwardly the urge now pushes into affairs and demands the right to test proposals and methods before the throne of God, and in so doing it sublimates all the forces connected with the proposal. The resultant activities are peaceful, conflicts are resolved. The peace which passes all understanding garrisons the heart. Life is whole and satisfying. The inarticulate cry of the urge is always more God, more God, more God.

HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

Lessons from the science of psychology are valuable aids in the prayer life, but undue emphasis must not be

placed on psychological hints because they have illuminative value. Emphasis on the subjective character of prayer has driven many people to fancy there is nothing else in prayer but the subjective. As a matter of fact, the reality of the subjective value, great as it is, depends on faith in the objective prayer as we know it in Jesus. To regard answered prayers as a proof of a peculiar nearness to God is a hindrance. Light, clear and transparent, love, rich and sacrificial, are the only real proofs of nearness. By these we understand the larger purpose and are therefore fitted to bear delay in answer to prayer. Secondary motives, unworthy motives and requests dictated by the coward within, spoil prayer, for these do not make for heroic action. The same is true when we are not honest, as well with the inner self as with the suppliant self, when we pretend with God, pretend to be willing and eager when really we are unwilling and unready to respond to the demands inherent in the prayer. The greatest of all hindrances to prayer is deceit. Let him that is about to pray make preparation before he makes supplication lest he deceive himself by thinking that he is not pretending to God.

GROWTH IN PRAYER

There are certain stages in the prayer-life which have been common to the experience of all. A fairly true illustration of this is in the growing relationship of a child to its parents. At first the child regards his parents as the general providers to whom he must make his requests when he desires pleasant things, and to whom he can go when he is frightened or needs comforting; but presently the child grows, and with growth develops some interest in the parents, gives little presents, and

seeks out their wishes. This is followed by a stage of admiration, when the boy thinks there is no one like his father and his mother. Then a consultation stage, a kind of sitting at the feet, when, even if others are present, half an ear is always kept for what father and mother are saying. Out of this there grows a sense of sympathy, an awakening to larger things, a keen interest in the general schemes of the family, a freedom to acknowledge ignorance, a desire for more understanding; a sense of pride in the family achievements, a natural hallowing of anything and everything that is associated with the home, a common will. These later developments never entirely shut out the earlier stages.

It is the same with the growing soul. When it passes out of one stage and enters into another, it retains the values of every stage through which it has passed. The highest form of prayer does not preclude the simple requests for good weather, success, daily bread, as well as the pleasant things that every child quite easily asks from parents. These simple requests that cannot be philosophically supported are justified, not by what they achieve, but because of the spirit of sonship that must tell father all its needs, and tell him, not primarily to get father to supply them, but because the child knows it is the father's biggest joy to help to carry the burden that worries him. Besides this, such petitionary prayer is one of the ways by which God brings light to the darkened life, courage to the faltering step, peace to the troubled soul; and certainly by such simple requests our pent-up energies find release, inhibitions are swept away, and freedom is increased.

Growth is vital to the joy that comes in the larger experience of prayer. Once accept the jollity of growing in prayer and many difficulties are cleared. The mental and the emotional clothes must have continual attention;

but there will never be a moment of superciliousness; all the stages of prayer are given full value.

Growth depends upon contact for nourishment. There is no such thing as isolated prayer. The Spirit that helpeth our infirmities is the Spirit of Divine fellowship. Praying together is not limited to corporate prayer. Corporate prayer is a subject too large to be discussed here; it deserves what as yet it has scarcely had, the serious study of those who will ask questions as to what place corporate prayer occupies in the economy of God, what is to be obtained by corporate prayer that cannot be obtained by individual prayer. There is an enormous amount that ought to be understood about corporate prayer before an assembly of wise men can venture to bind a new generation with set forms.

In writing of fellowship prayer it is necessary to ask questions about Jesus' agony in the garden. Was it connected with a threatened break in the fellowship? Was that agony caused by a dread lest the disciples should lose mutual faith?—I pray for them—that they may be with me—Holy Father keep them—that they may be one.

Fellowship in prayer with saints and angels and all whom we cannot see is only approached through fellowship in prayer with those whom we can see. The reality of this depends entirely upon a capacity for companionship. It is here that the intimacy of the sacraments mean so much to the prayer life. Fellowship is often realisable in the Holy Communion when it is hard to apprehend it in any other way, but prayer in the sacraments belong properly to corporate prayer, and is not to be considered in this place. Thanksgivings and Intercessions are essentially forms of fellowship in prayer, as St. Paul writes—"I thank my God upon every remembrance of *you*, always making intercession for *you*."

THE BODY FOR PRAYER

Whilst prayer is not dependent upon any of the aids that experience accumulates, the power of prayer is not free from the machinery which the mind sets up. The body can assist or retard. This is clear from the records of Jesus at prayer, of the apostles at prayer, the promise and exhortations of the New Testament concerning prayer, the peculiar office of the Divine Spirit in prayer, the connection in the Gospels between joyous prayer and fellowship, and the still more remarkable connection to be found in the Gospels between fellowship and the prayers of agony. These and similar passages from the Bible all point to the importance that prayer should be given both a well-ordered body and a well-ordered mind for its service.

Again, the Scripture records of the pervading and brooding unknown, and the records of the voices from heaven, do not allow the mistake of thinking that means of prayer are on the one hand entirely dependent upon intelligence, or on the other free of intelligence.

Again, the attitude of the body when praying is not such a matter of indifference as it is sometimes said to be. The Acts of the Apostles speak of Peter, Stephen, John and Paul as kneeling in prayer. Ancient monuments and frescoes show one praying with head erect, alert, eyes raised to heaven. Tertullian writes of this as if it were the customary attitude of the early Church. The mystics quite freely describe how they themselves pray at one time on their knees, at another lying flat on the back, at another lying prostrate, and so on. There is a posture natural to the deliberate acceptance of mystery and quite another natural to the definite clasping of the light of God close to the breast. The sensible touch

of things beautiful is known to be an aid towards realising the sacramental principle of prayer. A deliberate relaxation of the muscles is said to be of assistance towards abandonment. Movements of hand and eye are also known to be aids to perseverance. A good rule is so to adjust the body that it makes the least possible intrusion upon the spirit.

DEPARTMENTS

Intercessions and thanksgivings, though bound up with other activities of the mystic life, are also departments in the prayer-life. These may be practised as departments, though one leads into another. Of these we ought to consider four, perhaps five, although the fifth is of such a nature that it need not be written up, for it is not an exercise. It just comes, it is a gift of God, known to the mystics as the prayer of quiet. It falls upon the soul at times and places without any warning. It is a supernatural gift which may be desired, but cannot be practised.

The departments of prayer which are clearly natural and can be practised are :

- (1) The prayer of utterance.
- (2) The prayer of thought.
- (3) The prayer of social activity.
- (4) Reciprocal prayer.

(1) The prayer of utterance may be of thanksgiving, of claiming promises, of intercession, of invocation, of acclamation, indeed, of all the many groupings of words that, passing from the lips, influence the subconscious self as well as make appeal to the Father. These sounds

of prayer have much value in creating avenues through which thought and feeling can move at a later time, avenues along which in a day of sickness or danger the needy soul can quickly traverse to the Father. Even the saying of offices may at the moment of saying seem to be unreal, but by it the underlying self is moulded and a way is prepared for more intense prayer. This part of prayer has a value which is not yet realised by the Evangelical section of the Church. Modern psychology has emphasised the value of making affirmation as one of the best uses of vocal prayer.

(2) In the prayer of thought, the active mind seizes upon a passage of Scripture, a doctrine, or a promise or a scheme of the intelligence, and turns it over in the presence of God; meditates upon the relationship to the Father of all things around and within. There is here a coming in upon oneself, a drawing into the soul of many things and a recollecting how that all things are His and He is ours. It is in this way that what we may call "prayer perches" are made for the mind; perches from which thoughts, like birds, can make adventurous flights and back to which they spontaneously return for rest and renewal. This provision for a good return is most important. It is an effective cure for wandering thoughts, and for the restlessness which complains that it is not in the mood for prayer. Moreover, the perches that we thus set up in the mind develop into stations of appreciation and vibration. Appreciation, by which we are able to see things worth relating to the Heavenly Father and so create nothing less than an appetite for social prayer, and vibration, in which we are "all eyes and ears" and all the chords of love within us are set moving, and more so as the wind of God's Spirit strikes us and we give forth the answer in reciprocal prayer.

(3) In social prayer we find the healing art at work, "the right hand of the Lord" having its pre-eminence to the advantage of some creature or cause. Whenever the "Inasmuch" promise of Jesus is claimed, in prison, in sick room or council chamber, or in the street, there we have social prayer. In social prayer personal interests become utterly lost in the less transitory, larger, more constructive needs and aspirations of humanity.

(4) In reciprocal prayer, the advances of the divine Lover dominate everything. The sensitive soul, free to vibrate in response to spiritual influences, is continually seeking the desires of the beloved Lord for the sheer joy of acquiescing in them. Mystic reciprocation alone knows the ecstasy of abandonment to divine Love. According to devotional writers, not very many Christians trouble to seek after this experience of the everlasting. It is to be found with inward solitude, it is of all places the largest for movement, the clearest for insight, the fiercest for cleansing, and the richest in experiencing God. There is no prayer that transcends the prayer of reciprocal contemplation.

OF CERTAIN CALLS TO PRAYER

There is a certain type of Christian to whom is vouchsafed the mystic call to prayer, but this is not given by God to every Christian. At the first experience of one such call the Christian may brush the experience on one side with some such remark as, "I must have been dreaming." Insensitive people are inclined to laugh at mystic calls, to the great loss of the Church of Christ. Perhaps they think all life can be counted up and measured; or they may have known some ill-proportioned Christian who has indulged the call for itself and so has

fallen into the unbalancing distortions of spiritism. But distortions do not invalidate the experiences of all ages. The aged Abraham, the youthful Samuel, the shepherd Amos and the prince Isaiah, the Christ and His servant Paul, Julian of Norwich, Nicholas of Basle, John Woolman, Dorothy Kerin and Lord Radstock, have all borne witness to very definite breaks in upon the consciousness, impelling them to communion with God. Let no child of God hesitate to say, "Speak Lord for thy servant heareth." Such an one is not alone in these times. Present-day consultants in the mystic life know a number of Christians who regularly obey these calls, men and women of humble heart, through whom there flows that unique power of understanding and energy which manifests itself chiefly in finding out and testing what of life's proposals are according to the principles of Jesus. Oftentimes this call is given during the night. Then the Christian at once offers his consciousness and energy to God.

He who thinks he has received a call must not even answer until he has fortified himself with the spirit of Jesus, and with His promises whose Spirit helpeth our infirmities; then the hearer will humbly offer the whole of his intelligence as well as his energy. He who hears must not offer less than the whole of his intelligence as well as his energy, or he will pass from being the conscious co-operator with God for which he was made into a terrified victim of spirit influences. There is all the difference between being a worker together with God in Christ and His unseen friends, and being a gambler with spirit influences.

He, who for the good of all desires to answer the call of God, should take the utmost care that his mind be strong and tranquil in the truths of Christ's promises. He

should accustom himself to using the magnificent affirmations of St. Paul and St. John with his own added thereto, using them as weapons in spiritual warfare. With this preparation he has nothing to fear from the unseen world, and everything to rejoice in, for he is risen in Christ and he is more than conqueror.

But he who approaches the unseen influences with a flippant mind has every reason to be afraid, since it is terribly true that no man has yet found a principle outside Christ that can control spirit influences.

THE INFECTIOUSNESS OF PRAYER

If prayer is of so great importance for the understanding of the wholeness of life, can it be taught? When Jesus was asked to teach prayer He just gave an example of the manner of prayer that He Himself used. He taught by praying with His disciples. As the mother does not teach her infant to pray, but prays with the child, knowing full well that if she teaches the child some prayers to say to her, the day will dawn when the form only will remain; so Jesus did not teach a philosophy of prayer, but allowed men to see His own prayer life and to share in all its many variations. There is no limit to the influence of praying together. The little child may not know how far the mother enters into the unseen, but the child will recall with reverence how the mother, night and morning, knelt by the cot talking to the great Father in heaven. The disciples vividly remembered Jesus going out to the hillside to pray. The description of the agony of Gethsemane is clearly the result of a very deep impression made on the disciples. The disciples caught Jesus' prayer habit. It is still possible to catch it. Let men but keep close to Him and

as they catch His enthusiasm for the Father, thankfulness grows; as they catch His enthusiasm for the Kingdom, assurance grows; as they catch His enthusiasm for men, women and little ones, understanding grows. Jesus Himself is infectious. Nothing can take the place of contact with Jesus.

F. W. DWELLY.

XIII

THE DEVOTIONAL USE OF THE BIBLE

DR. GORE in his recent book *The Holy Spirit and the Church*¹ describes the uses of Scripture as twofold: (1) the *evidential* use, in which "the documents must be treated and estimated solely on their historical value and as witnesses to what the writers believed and had experienced." (2) The *spiritual*, or what we may call the *devotional* use, in which "each Christian is challenged to put himself to school with book after book, with the sure conviction that each one of the books has something to teach him, some special aspect of truth which his soul needs to mould it into the divine likeness."

This distinction in the uses of Scripture should bring a certain sense of relief to those of us whose minds are somewhat distracted and overwhelmed by the weight of the critical apparatus that we have to carry about and open, whenever we approach the study of the Bible for spiritual profit. It is a relief to be told that we may be allowed, in spite of psychologists, to put the "uses" of Scripture into separate water-tight compartments and switch on each use in turn for its special purpose. It is a relief to feel that now and then we may be allowed to keep our inquisitive and over-sensitive critical faculties in check, so that, undisturbed and free, we may drink deeply from the wells of the fountain of life. Yet all the time we must be aware that it is *two* uses of Scripture, and not one only, that we hold, and that we only separate

¹ P. 275.

them for the sake of convenience. We cannot really remain unaware of the findings of modern scholarship or be unconscious of the results of recent investigations, though we may at times deliberately shut our eyes to them, and, ignoring "the grammatical and bodily sense" in accordance with Origen, concentrate more fully upon both the moral and mystical interpretation of each several passage.

On the other hand, there will be others who find that their critical faculties, far from being out of court in the devotional use of the Bible, are called into play at every step. They discover that, instead of adding difficulties and obstacles to the path of devotion, the results of criticism enlighten, illuminate, make living the Word of God before them. Criticism does not necessarily destroy; it also rebuilds and revivifies. Obscure passages are made clear, history and legend are distinguished, prophecies and predictions are placed in their proper setting and interpreted in relation to their historical background, and the Word of God, tested so as by fire, shines out to attract both the reason and the heart of man as never before.

We cannot evict criticism, even if we desired to do so; for, before even the first step is taken towards the study of the Bible, each must decide for himself whether the Bible has any historical value at all, or whether the subject of so much criticism can still remain the Word of God. In England, as elsewhere, there seems to be a transitional stage—the old ideas on the authority of the Bible and the reasons for such authority have gone, the new ideas are only now in process of filtering from the scholars to the people. Meanwhile, there is bound to be a certain perplexity, haziness and suspense; and the ordinary person either waits patiently for fuller light, or, if he be

impatient, throws over the Bible completely and dismisses it as unworthy of serious attention. The mind is so apt to leap to unfounded conclusions that there is great need at this time for constructive teaching of the Bible, so that the perplexed may be helped to see the greater gains that modern scholarship provides, and the impatient may be persuaded that some real residuum of authority is still to be found in the Bible—an authority based on firmer foundations than ever before.

It is the true nature of inspiration which must be grasped before the study of the Bible can be approached with any profit. There still lingers perhaps in the minds of some people, though they may be unconscious of the source from which it comes, a theory similar to that of Plato, which he expresses in the words, "No man *in his wits* attains prophetic truth and inspiration," and which has its illustration in the Pythoness at Delphi on her prophetic tripod. As a contrast to this, a picture of Carpaccio in the church of St. Giorgio degli Schiavoni in Venice shows us St. Jerome in his study in the act of begetting an idea. He is standing up by his desk, pen in hand, and has the look of a man on whom an inspiration is slowly dawning. Which is the truer picture of the method of divine inspiration—the Pythoness of Plato, with whom can be compared the dervish or the modern medium, or St. Jerome with his faculties alert and stretched to grasp at and retain the dawning of his thought?

To others, again, inspiration means the infallibility of every letter and every word, so that each letter and each word, taken separately as well as together, "represents the mind of God as perfectly as though He had written it Himself."¹ For the Jew it is God Who writes

¹ Peake's *Commentary on the Bible*, p. 3.

with His finger on tables of stone, for the Mohammedan it is the Koran sent direct to Mohammed from heaven conveniently written in the Arabic tongue. This is the "dictation" idea with its modern parallel of the typewriter and amanuensis. To others, it is the writers themselves who are infallible: they are "as flutes blown upon by the Spirit;"¹ "They preserve their individuality, but are exempt from all mistakes."² At one time, the prophets are the selected channels of inspiration: witness the Jewish Canon, which excluded all books supposed to be written outside the prophetic era stretching from Moses to the death of Malachi. At another time, it is the Apostles who are selected: witness the Canon of the New Testament, in the drawing up of which the early Fathers judged the inspiration of a book largely from its reputed apostolic authorship. Subject to this criterion the epistle of St. James and the book of Revelation had a narrow escape from being cast into outer darkness. And yet there is reason to believe that neither prophets nor Apostles regarded themselves or one another as infallible. Hosea,³ for instance, did not refrain from criticising the bloodthirstiness of the house of Jehu, in which bloodthirstiness Elisha surely played a provocative part; and equally in the New Testament, we find that St. John, perhaps deliberately, corrects or alters statements of the Synoptists.⁴ These men, though they claimed to be inspired, did not claim to be infallible, nor need we overload ourselves or them with a conception of inspiration that is both fictitious and inhuman.

We have summarised briefly two theories of inspiration which are now exploded. That of literal inspiration has been refuted by the findings of textual criticism, that

¹ Athenagoras.

³ i. 4.

² Irenæus.

⁴ e. g. the date of the Passover.

of the plenary inspiration of the writers by the results of historical research and archæological discovery. Both theories have been tried and found wanting, and it remains for us to ask: What theory of inspiration is there on which we can base our devotional study and rest secure? Definitions of the word are many. Canon Storr, for instance, in his essay on *The Bible and its Value*, defines it as “*inbreathing*, a term applicable rather to the writers of the Bible than to what they wrote. It is not the record which is inspired, but the men who composed it.”¹ Dr. Gore again speaks of the Old Testament (and this would surely apply to the New Testament as well) as “not the word of God in the sense that everything there narrated as history is historically correct, or that we can isolate any particular text, and say: ‘This is an infallible utterance of God’; but it *conveys to us*, in a variety of books of different kinds, one moral and spiritual message, really inspired by the Spirit of God, who both ‘spake by the prophets’ and also penetrated through the whole assemblage of books.”² There must be degrees of inspiration as well as degrees of revelation. This would accord more with what we know of God’s working in other departments of life; how He gives us His revelation progressively, and leads us ever on into further truth as we are able to bear it. He never overwhelms us with a knowledge that would bewilder us, but as a wise teacher He led the Jews from their crude idea of God as a man like themselves who walked in the garden and smelt the sweet savour of sacrifices, through different stages to such lofty conceptions as these:

“Seek Him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and

¹ *Liberal Evangelicalism*, p. 93.

² *The Holy Spirit and the Church*, p. 256.

maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth—the Lord is His name.”¹

“In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and He bare them and carried them all the days of old.”²

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.”³

The writers were inspired but in no ways infallible; they had a genius for religion, but that did not prevent them from making mistakes and failing in accuracy. God does not use for His purposes automatic machines, but human beings. Moreover, to realise that the writers were really human and of like passions with ourselves makes the Bible so much more a real and living book; to realise that it was through such writers that God spoke and acted makes it no less divine, but rather a revelation to us of what God can effect and *does* effect through such unworthy instruments. The initiative is of God, but the reception must be of man. “Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.” “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

Convinced, therefore, that man's understanding must condition and to a certain extent limit divine revelation, we have still, before we can take up our study of the Bible, to give a reason both to ourselves and to others for the belief that the Bible stands as a whole on a higher level of inspiration than any other book in the world. Why should the Bible rather than Plato or Shakespeare be authorised to be read in our churches? Is not all great literature informed and influenced by the all-pervading Spirit of God? Yes, but the difference in the

¹ Amos v. 8.

² Isaiah lxiii. 9.

³ Psalm li. 17.

inspiration of books will surely lie in the content of their message and in the orientation of the minds of their writers. The Good is the message of Plato, his orientation the World of Ideas; Humanity is the message of Shakespeare, this world's stage his orientation; but both the Old and the New Testament writers proclaim the Christ, and God is their Alpha and Omega. In the content and purpose of their message is their claim to greater inspiration. God reveals Himself in many ways, in the paintings of a Titian, the poetry of a Browning, the humour of a Lewis Carroll, the constructive ability of a Henry Ford, but it is the purpose for which these "inspired" men use their gifts that determines the nature of their inspiration. True inspiration must deal with the ultimate ends of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, which is only another formula, and that a philosophical one, for God the Father Almighty and His Self-Revelation to man. Other authors manifest God indirectly, unconsciously, uncertainly; the Biblical authors proclaim Him from the housetops, with missionary conviction and with the note of authority. "The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" The Word of God is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, God made manifest among men.

But, as has already been stated, though the theme of the Bible be God, distinct degrees of inspiration and varying strata of thought can be found not only within its different books, but even within the chapters themselves. Leviticus, although redeemed by the second great Commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," cannot be placed in the same category as Isaiah or the book of Job, nor can the list of place names in Joshua (ch. xv.) provide the same spiritual nourishment as the opening and closing chapters of the book. The closing verses of Psalm li. contradict in the most prosaic manner

some of the highest spiritual teaching to be found in the Old Testament. 2 Peter and Jude are on a distinctly lower level of inspiration than either St. John's Gospel or the major letters of St. Paul. The test of the true inspiration of each passage can be judged by its effect upon the heart and mind : neither authorship nor chronology have really any vital bearing on the question. A book or passage is inspired in proportion to the moral and spiritual uplift that it gives the reader. "By their fruits ye shall know them." That is the reason why our Lord's words and teaching come to us with so unique an authority. "No man spake like this man." And it is certain that no mere man could have been inspired enough to utter them. The truths to which He gave utterance in so terse and memorable a form must sooner or later meet with a response in the hearts and minds of all men, and sooner or later the tired, the disillusioned and the sinful will come to feed on the Bread of life and live for ever. The unanswerable truths contained in His teaching, the life-giving power of His words point us to their Divine source : had we no other proofs, the words are in themselves sufficient witness to His Divine Sonship. They *are* both spirit and life.

But in the Bible as a whole, it is not each separate text or each separate verse that is always inspired : the inspiration may be more truly contained in the general purport of the whole. In the Old Testament this is certainly the case, and a theory that placed the minutest Jewish ceremonial law on the same level of inspiration as the great commandment in Deuteronomy "to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy might" would reduce the whole question of Biblical authority to absurdity and lead to both mental and moral disaster. Our Lord Himself challenges the statements

of the Old Testament when, for instance, He substitutes for the law of Retaliation the law of Love; and in a study of His use of the Hebrew Bible we must needs conclude that He did not claim to fulfil isolated fragments, but the whole body of Scripture.¹ He does not claim to fulfil the office of Messiah literally in every detail as it is portrayed in the prophetic writings and the Psalms, but He certainly does claim to fulfil it spiritually and as a whole in His teaching and in His life. He acknowledges His Messiahship, and that He must suffer as a prelude to glory, but His references often point to the picture of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah liii. and to the Son of Man in Daniel vii., rather than to any particular passage that describes the inauguration of the Messianic kingdom under the auspices of the house of David. As Messiah He claims to consummate, not each particular prediction, but the experience of all saints and prophets before Him. Moreover, He constantly applies to Himself passages that in the original context relate to the advent of Jehovah. In His use of prophecies to illustrate His teaching, He interprets them spiritually and takes them as a whole. Only once perhaps does He set Himself deliberately to fulfil a prophecy in detail, and that is when He chooses to ride into Jerusalem in the lowly fashion suggested by the ninth chapter of Zechariah.² Surely, we can be free to follow our Lord's guidance in this matter, and interpret the message of the Old Testament as a whole, rather than "line upon line," to our greater understanding and spiritual gain.

And not only in the interpretation of the Old Testament

¹ Matthew v. 18 (cp. Luke xvi. 17) might seem to contradict this statement, but no one can deny that our Lord, in revealing the inner moral significance of each "jot and tittle" of the law, substantiated His claim to fulfil it as a whole.

² For main thought, see Edgehill's *Evidential Value of Prophecy*.

must we follow the guidance of our Lord, but also in His presentation of truth. Truth is contained in fairy tale and parable as well as in historical fact and scientific conclusion. It is the character and nature of the truth that vary. Moral truth can be as adequately presented in myth or allegory as in narrative or dogma. It is the deepest thoughts that are the most inexpressible, and only myth or allegory can bring them within the reach of our understanding. It is in the myths that the heart of Plato is found; in the parable of the Prodigal Son is the Gospel of Gospels.

With this conception of inspiration in view, we can now turn to the actual study of the Bible and its practical use both for ourselves and for others. And in so doing it will be convenient to divide the subject into three heads and to take them one by one. (1) Methods of study suggested for those who read this book. (2) Methods of study to be recommended to those who have had less experience in Bible reading. (3) Methods of teaching the Bible in school and Bible Class.

1. Methods of Study for those who read this book.

It is the reprehensible habit of many nowadays to ignore the Old Testament completely, except for such portions of it as seem to them to be hurled like a bolt from the blue, without reason or rhyme, sequence or setting, from the lectern Sunday by Sunday.¹ The result naturally is that knowledge of the Old Testament is decidedly uneven, and in ignorance many condemn it unheard on the charge of unintelligibility and total lack

¹ It would be helpful if a short preface or explanatory remark preceded the reading of each lesson. Besides providing a setting and background, which otherwise are lacking, an introduction attracts the attention of those inclined to sink into apathy after the exertion of a psalm!

of coherence and interest. Exciting names such as Habbakuk and Haggai remain in hiding; Amos merely recalls the riddle of Amos-quito and moves to mirth and ribaldry; Jonah only raises the problem of the whale and the size of its throat with which wandering minds associate a flippant incident in the *Just So Stories* that is unfortunately so very similar. We miss "so much and so much." But were we to turn to the Old Testament as to a library of books collected after many years of toil by loving hands, written in blood and tears, rescued in times of tribulation, and cherished and compiled in times of wealth, and were we to determine to extract from each book in turn its own particular goodness, we should then find contained therein such passion and such pain, such loud-voiced chant of praise, such unconscious humour, such interest in the ways of God with men, as are contained in no other book of the self-same size in the world. History, poetry, codes of law, maxims, sermons, historical romances and a Tract for the Times jostle one another page by page: all with the exception of Esther and the Song of Songs are written with one purpose—to teach about God. Let us then turn to their study.

We shall all probably differ in our methods: we cannot lay down definite rules for one another's temperaments. Nevertheless, I would suggest that there are three methods in the study of the Old Testament from which a choice can be made, either from time to time or altogether, if one particular method is found after trial to be the more serviceable.

Firstly, there is the method which I would describe as *historical*. We can take as our subject either (a) *God's dealing with nations* or (b) *God's dealing with men*. In either we are studying development under the guiding hand of God; for throughout all our critical and analytical

study we must remember that it is the *religious* history of the nation, the *religious* development of the man which is the beginning and end of all our search. But the ground must first be cleared and the background made living and intelligible: chronology must be roughly fixed in the mind, and the histories of ancient empires such as Babylon, Egypt and Greece brought into line. Then and not till then will it be possible to trace the religious development of the Jewish people from their first appearance as an entity under Abraham, through the different stages of settlement, migration, oppression, deliverance and conquest, until we reach their consolidation as a united nation with one capital and one head. The consequent history of alternate invasion and repulse, the innovations of Antiochus and the magnificent stand of the Maccabees provide reading of enthralling interest. The romance lies in the gradual emergence of the Jewish people from the dead level of their surroundings to their unique position of God's chosen people, and in the choice by God of so insignificant a nation for the shaping of His purpose. Historical events are but the loom on which God is weaving His pattern and working His purpose out. The ancient world is the stage; empires represent the players. The action is bound up with the choice by God of the Jewish nation to be a light to lighten the Gentiles; the drama lies in their response, the tragedy in their refusal. We read, mark, learn—and suddenly discover that the old-world story is perennially new. It is the drama of the Christian Church.

The study of (b) *God's dealings with men* can be treated in the same spirit of historical criticism. We can take a certain personage in the Old Testament (*e.g.* Joseph, Elijah, Nehemiah) and study the story of his life and the development of his character in relation to his surround-

ings and the demands made on him by God. The Old Testament contains thrilling biographies, which become still more thrilling when read in the light of their stirring times. To study the different methods used by God in the calling of His servants ¹ and the response of each to the call provides us with a valuable and inspiring illustration of His personal interest in and treatment of each single individual. To study the manner in which these men met the various crises of their lives ² gives us courage to rise up in the name of the Lord and slay our own particular devils. The biography of Jeremiah repays our study most highly. For one thing, his writings, aptly named the Confessions of Jeremiah, are more autobiographical than any other book in the Hebrew Bible. For another, in many respects, Jeremiah foreshadows the Passion of our Lord. He too was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and it is thought by many that the picture of the Suffering Servant is drawn from the lineaments of Jeremiah himself.

The *second* method of studying the Old Testament might perhaps be described as logical, or rather *biological*, for it comprises the study of the sequence of ideas and the growth and development of thought. The comparative method is yet another name. No more interesting or more absorbing study can be imagined than that of tracing the Idea of God, or the conception of the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom, through the Old Testament writings. Nor could anything be more valuable for clearing our

¹ e.g. Moses (Exodus iii.), Samuel (1 Samuel iii.), David (1 Samuel xvi.), Elijah (1 Kings xvii.), Isaiah (Isaiah vi.), Jeremiah (Jeremiah i.), Ezekiel (Ezekiel ii.).

² e.g. Joseph and his brethren (Genesis xlii.), Moses and the golden calf (Exodus xxxii.), David and Saul (1 Samuel xxiv., xxvi.), Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings xviii.), Elisha at Dothan (2 Kings vi.), Isaiah and Sennacherib (2 Kings xix.).

minds about God, for securing a real grasp on Him and all that He stands for. In the same way the subjects of human nature and sin, of the future life and judgment, if compared and tested by the standard of Christ, provide a course of moral teaching, ascending to a climax in the Gospels. For, throughout the study of these Old Testament conceptions, continual reference must be made to the teaching of our Lord, and all must be brought to the touchstone of His Truth. Only by this constant comparison and revision of our ideas in the light of His can we keep clearly in our minds the final authority of His teaching, and distinguish between that which is partially and incompletely revealed in the Old Testament and that which is perfectly and wholly revealed in Jesus.

The *third* method is that of *meditation*, though the use of this term does not mean in any way that the preceding methods exclude the practice of meditation altogether. The study of God's dealing with men and the comparison of ideas about Him, however critically conducted, must, if approached in a spirit of reverence, lead us eventually to an ever deeper knowledge of His nature and an ever more enthusiastic devotion to His service.¹ But this third method is of a far more spontaneous and erratic nature; since, though for want of a better name it may be described as meditative, it is never *premeditated* and follows no fixed plan; it shifts and turns according to the humour. But the Holy Spirit guides even our waywardness. "The wind bloweth where it listeth—so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." By His grace our wayward moods are guided to the Bible to find their natural outlet of prayer and praise within it; by His grace our wandering thoughts are gathered in and find within the Bible their focus and their inspiration; by His grace our very wilfulness is

¹ See suggestions for meditation at the end of this essay.

attracted to the Bible to find within it the fulfilment of our heart's desire. Under His persuasion a well-known verse or passage is turned up, read quickly, and its main thought grasped; or a verse is picked out and turned over and over in the mind to bear fruit in due season. The choice of the passage may seem to vary with the weather, with outward circumstances, with the inward disposition of the moment, but the Holy Spirit meets our needs, unspoken though they are, trivial though they seem, and brings us through the Bible to their satisfaction. In summer weather or on overflowing days we turn gladly to a psalm of praise, in times of anxiety and mental torment to a psalm of trust; in days of national crisis we take courage from the throbbing pages of Isaiah, in time of peace and leisure we take our ease in half-humorous enjoyment of the Proverbs. We treat the Bible as an old familiar friend accustomed to our varying moods and always ready to adapt itself to meet them. From long familiarity bits come to us by heart and rise to our lips as need occurs. The Bible becomes a part of us, woven into the tissue of our thought and feeling, even threading our very language with the pattern of its words. This habit of inconsequent "dipping" should never be let drop: it counterbalances the seriousness of other study, and gives us a sense of intimacy, spontaneity and familiarity, joined with the liberty of the Spirit to be our own erratic selves.

In the study of the New Testament, practically the same three methods can be utilised. By the *historical* method, the Gospels and Epistles can be related to their background, the prevailing ideas of the times discussed, "the conflict of religions in the Empire" followed with an understanding eye. To analyse the reasons for the failure of the Pharisees to fulfil their vocation, to observe

the attitude of the Jew to the Gentile, the Greek to the barbarian, the Roman to his fellow-citizen, to discriminate between the various cults and theories of the time will all serve to bring out the distinctive teaching of the New Testament, and to provide it with its own context and appropriate setting. Again, the lives of St. Paul and St. Peter, the Acts of the Apostles, and above all, the Life of our Lord, can be studied objectively as stories thrilling in their mere perusal, glowing in the revelation of character and of One Character in particular that they portray. The Life of our Lord is the Story of Stories, the Drama of Dramas. We should constantly read a Gospel as if for the first time, straight through like a novel, with all our imagination called into play, reading ourselves into the spirit and action of the times, and thus renew and reinvigorate our early impressions and catch once more the magic of the Story.

The logical or *comparative* method can also be applied to New Testament study. The teaching of our Lord on the Father, and on His own relation to Him, on the Kingdom and the future, on sin and forgiveness, on service and prayer, should be compared, correlated, pondered, and prayed over. The subsequent teaching of the early Church on the Work and Person of our Lord, the Personality and influence of the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church, its ministry and authority, the use of the Sacraments, are all valuable subjects of study and lively incentives to our private devotion. The Epistles, read in conjunction with the Acts, provide us with sufficient material for framing our picture of the development of thought and life within that early fellowship of the Holy Spirit which is now the Catholic Church. Once more, as in the Old Testament that precedes, so also in the early Church that follows, all doctrine must be referred to its

true standard in Jesus Christ, and be tested by it as to whether it springs from the same source or from alien water, whether in fact it be of God or man. Another study, which Archbishop Trench has made so illuminating and attractive in his book on Synonyms, is that of the comparison and meaning of New Testament words. Words such as Love, Grace, Redemption, Salvation; phrases such as Eternal Life, the Kingdom of Heaven, become, when studied, pregnant with power and iridescent with the light of the Spirit. Studies on Christian virtues such as Humility, Patience (or rather *ὑπομονή*, endurance), Generosity, sweet Reasonableness, must have their effect in time on Christian character. Studies on prayer and thanksgiving must eventually bring us to our knees.

Meditation on the Words of Life contained in the Gospels is perhaps the method used by all more constantly than any other. A saying of our Lord is always pregnant with fresh meaning. As new conditions arise, as new problems raise their heads to strike, His words become charged with significance and stand out as a challenge to the times. Each generation interprets them afresh in the light of its own experience. No one generation, no one person can interpret them fully. Clear on the surface, but deep as any pool, they draw us soon out of our depth if we dive too lightly into them. The Holy Spirit alone can lead us into all truth. To those who follow humbly, the Word of God brings comfort and assurance, peace and joy; to those who challenge proudly a sword stands in their way: to those who seek sincerely Christ is the Way as well as Goal.

For all these suggested courses a concordance is necessary, and, where possible, a version of the New Testament in the original Greek. A notebook is an asset, or preferably a Bible with wide margins and an owner who

does not scruple to make use of them. Commentaries on various books and books dealing with the Bible are exceedingly helpful but not essential adjuncts. A short glossary of those books and commentaries likely to be of value to the reader is appended to this essay.

Lastly, I should not agree with those who inveigh against clergy and teachers for using their time for private Bible study chiefly as a preparation for sermons and for lessons. Often it is the best incentive for real and honest thought, often in grappling with a problem for the sake of others we solve it for ourselves. In seeking how to present God to others, in seeking His great and glorious purpose for them we may haply chance upon Him un-awares and our own pathway be illumined. For their sakes we sanctify ourselves.

2. Methods of Study to be recommended to those who have had less experience in Bible reading.

Our first object should be to familiarise with the text those who have had little first-hand knowledge of the Bible. The New Testament should be recommended first for reading, both for the comparative simplicity of its language and the final authority of its teaching, as well as and above all for its subject, the Life and Work of our Lord. The reading of the Old Testament should not be proposed until after some time, and then in a far more simplified form than in our present Bible. Uneducated people have hard work to find their places in it under its present form, and to put the life of Jeremiah, for instance, into chronological order, would call out the gifts needed for a jigsaw puzzle. Extracts from the Old and New Testaments, such as have been issued recently by the Cambridge University Press,¹ extracts from the

¹ *The Children's Bible.* (Cambridge University Press.)

Gospels such as Mrs. Mumford's¹ book for children, extracts such as *A Bible Anthology*² contains, should serve by way of an introductory and elementary handbook to the fuller instruction that is to come. Bibles too should be attractively bound in coloured bindings. Why should the Book of Good Tidings alone be clothed upon with mourning? A Bible should be so bound and used that a caller would find it lying on the drawing-room sofa like a novel, instead of being perched upon a table with an aspidistra³ as its sole companion, or cast out to the spare bedroom to remain there dusty and unopened. I am sure the Bible would be read more widely and more naturally if its present "format" did not make it so conspicuous.

I would suggest that simple books upon the Bible are helpful to beginners. These serve to give the background and the setting that the reader cannot supply himself: they serve to quicken thought and stimulate imagination. The difficulty lies in discovering books that are really simple. A whole army of writers is needed to popularise the reference books and to put them into words that can be understood of the people. It is the vocabulary, not so much the thought, that prevents the circulation among the uneducated of such admirable books as the Student Movement provides, and will account for the fact that the list of simple books at the end of this essay is lamentably meagre. Short and simple-worded commentaries and meditations on the text are needed: anthologies of great Biblical passages made up in cheap, attractive forms should find a market. Sir Arthur

¹ *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ.* (Longmans.)

² King's Literature Series. (Edited by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch.)

³ A plant found in certain localities in the front-window of the best parlour. Generally flanked by Nottingham lace curtains.

Quiller-Couch has done excellent work in securing recognition for the Bible nowadays; for again and again in essays and lectures he refers to the superb literature of the Bible, and it is perhaps by this route that many will return home to the enjoyment of its pasture. Reading cards are valuable and necessary in promoting a habit of Bible reading among those unaccustomed to it, but they should be drawn up on some coherent system, and grouped around some special subject or some special train of thought. It is impossible to read the Bible intelligently or fruitfully if one jumps daily from thought to thought, with no obvious connection between the two except their date of issue.

3. *Methods of Teaching the Bible in School and Class.*

The teaching will be modified to suit the age, average intellect and general character of the class. With every fresh class fresh experiments will have to be attempted. The gradation of lessons for different ages is an obvious necessity. But even if of the same age, a Bible class in a slum district and a form in an ordinary High School will need very different matter and a very different presentation. The Bible must be presented to every class attractively, and that necessitates a search for the point of contact which attracts. Younger forms are absorbed and interested in the Biblical narratives and in the characters who play their parts. The questions that arise are moral and deal with the decisions and conduct of the character in question. Unconsciously the children take from their reading the outlook that belongs to the characters they so whole-heartedly admire. Sometimes they dramatise a story and that story stays to live. They learn by heart, not "pieces" set mechanically, but passages that come out of the lesson and are a living part of it. In this way

the "Bible atmosphere" steals round them unawares, and becomes the native air in which they breathe. Still unspoiled, the younger children grow to love their Bible and their Lord.

Older children, who have begun to think abstractly, are more interested in ideas and the way in which things happen. They dislike "pi-jaw," and nothing is more destructive of an incipient interest in the Bible than to use it indiscriminately as a handbook of moral conduct with especial reference to the class. It is by an impersonal approach that the personal application is reached at length.

With those classes that have suffered too greatly from an overdose of "the personal touch," and who as a consequence tend to react against any form of religious teaching, it may be the wiser plan to direct their attention away from the Bible for a time and concentrate on some other subject, which, by its very matter, will eventually bring them indirectly and without their knowledge back to it. A study of the religions of other people, their ideas of God and man's approach to Him, may often drive them back to the Revelation of God in Jesus Christ; a study of social problems may bring them in despair to find a solution at the feet of Jesus; a study of heroic lives may set them seeking the Light by which such men and women lived. In a Bible class connected with a parish, owing to the lack of equipment and time as well as lack of education, the instruction will probably need to be more elementary than in a class at school; yet useful study can be carried out with the help of Study Circle books and simply-drawn-up schemes. Studies in the Parables,¹ the Making of the Bible,² the Foundations

¹ *Short Studies for Schoolgirls on the Parables of Christ.* (Published by Committee of the University Women's Camps for School-girls.)

² K. L. M. Rowton. National Society's Depository.

of the Church,¹ the Idea of the Kingdom,² can all be made interesting and spiritually dynamic, if only care is taken to provide a point of contact and to keep the teaching to a level on which questions and discussion are possible and easy. In a school, schemes of study can be carried out more easily with the aid of notebooks, maps, pictures, and other apparatus; commentaries and devotional books can be bought and lent, essays written as a stimulus to thought. Questioning, however embarrassing, should be encouraged by the teacher. It not only creates an atmosphere of fearlessness and honesty, especially when the teacher is bold to confess ignorance, but it is also the best method of ascertaining the minds of the pupils, and of gauging the impressions made upon them by the teaching. Without this knowledge the teaching is but a boomerang returned, an arrow spent in vain.

Some form of prayer and worship should, where possible, be linked up and correlated with the Bible teaching as an outlet for expression; and in the same way an opportunity for social service should be afforded to the impulse to serve which arises naturally from all true Bible study, and which needs but wise direction to some channel. It is difficult to read aloud in class or to recommend the Bible under its present form for indiscriminate reading, owing to the unreadable portions that sometimes unfortunately occur in the most beautiful Old Testament passages. An expurgated Bible such as *The School Bible*, drawn up by two school teachers, of which the first volume is already published,³ and the *Children's Bible* of the

¹ *The Foundations of the Church of Christ*. (National Society's Depository.)

² C. A. Law, *Outline Studies on the Kingdom of God*. (University Women's Camps.)

³ *The School Edition of the Old Testament*. Vol. I. D. Batho and L. Hyde. (S.P.C.K.)

Cambridge University Press already recommended,¹ would meet the case sufficiently.

Private reading of the Bible unhappily is out of fashion ; the habit of Family Prayers, owing to the demands of modern life and the pressure of our economic conditions, has been largely given up : the bulk of our people have lost their faith in the Bible as a living force in their lives. Yet the absence of definite Bible instruction and private devotional reading must have its effect sooner or later upon individual character and national idealism. "What a man thinks he becomes. And what a man thinks is chiefly a question of what he attends to." The New Testament is the only written record of the Life of our Lord, the one authentic Portrait. A first-hand study of this portrait is indispensable to Christian life and character. "The Bible is the way into the knowledge of Christ. It is the key with which we may unlock the otherwise closed door."² It still possesses its magnetism ; its pages still cast their ancient spell upon the hearts of men ; it still has power to attract. Higher criticism does no more than sweep away obscurities, brush away perplexities, and unveil more fully the Revelation of God in Christ. Whether Jonah's whale be hypothetical or not,³ the persuasiveness and irresistibility of God's attraction is shown forth none the less in Jonah's conversion and ultimate acceptance of his mission. Whether the walls of Jericho fell flat from causes natural or supernatural, the glory of God's might is shown in the miracle of Israel's enthusiasm and morale. Higher criticism but adds wonder to His workings.

The Bible has always been the most powerful instru-

¹ See p. 254.

² E. S. Woods, *Modern Discipleship*, p. 65, and for the general thought, *The Value of Bible Study*, Chap. IV.

³ See Moulton's *Modern Reader's Bible*, pp. 1423-1424.

ment in the winning of converts to Christ. Take, for instance, St. Augustine, who, after long and agonising search for the pearl of great price, hears the words, "Take, read, take, read," in his ears, and writes in his Confessions: "I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting, for I had there laid down the codex of the Apostle when I got up to leave him. I seized, opened it, and read in silence the passage upon which my eyes first fell: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' I cared not to read further, nor was there need. For all at once, as I came to the end of this sentence, my heart was filled with a sunshine of confidence, before which all my dark doubts fled away." Similarly, George Fox, in the same anguish of spirit, writes in his Journal: "I fasted much, walked abroad in solitary places many days, and often took my Bible and sat in hollow trees and lonesome places until night came on, and frequently in the night walked about by myself. Oh, the everlasting love of God to my soul, when I was in great distress! When my troubles and torments were great, there was this love exceeding great." And it was said of him later on that if the Bible itself were ever to be lost it might almost be found again in the mouth of George Fox, so well did he know it.¹

To us also in this generation may the Word of God become once more "a lantern unto our feet and a light unto our path." Unless we put our feet into the imprint of our Master's, we cannot follow Christ the Way; unless we devote heart and mind to the study of His Word, we cannot attain to Christ the Truth; unless we dedicate our aspirations and desires to the doing of His Will, we cannot

¹ Extract from *A Book of Quaker Saints*, pp. 52-53. L. V. Hodgkin.

receive Christ the Life. The Bible is given to us by God, centred in Christ, informed by the Spirit; by its means we learn to follow the Way, to grasp the Truth, to lay hold on the Life. "Salvation is of Christ the Lord."

M. I. ROGERS.

NOTES FOR MEDITATION ON SELECTED PASSAGES

I. FOR HISTORICAL STUDY.

Elisha's Vision at Dothan (2 Kings vi. 8-23).

Notes on the Story. Elisha deliberately deceives the enemy and leads them into the hands of the Israelites. It is suggested that their blindness is rather that of credulity than of any physical infirmity. Horses and chariots (17) symbolise strength. (Cp. Elijah's Translation, 2 Kings ii. 11, 12.)

Meditation on the mystical vision vouchsafed to Elisha in answer to his courage and his faith. *Key-note.* The ever-present guardianship of God and His holy angels. Cp. Psalm xci., Matthew xxviii. 20. Francis Thompson. "In no strange land." *Text* "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (16). Cp. 1 Samuel xiv. 6, xvii. 37. Isaiah xxxi. 3. Zechariah iv. 6. Matthew x. 28-31.

2. FOR COMPARATIVE STUDY.

The Parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19-31).

Notes. Hades = Sheol or place of departed spirits, not Gehenna. Abraham addresses Dives tenderly as "child."

Meditation on the future life. Compare vagueness of O.T. References only in Ps. xlix. 15, Ps. lxxiii. 23-24, Isaiah xxvi. 19, Job xix. 25-27, Daniel xii. 2.

Suggestions given in the story. (a) Personality remains.

(b) Memory is retained. (c) Recognition of others.

(d) Gradation in reward and punishment. (e)

Character is not fixed, but still responsive and pliable.

Key-note. The assurance of a future life. *Text*

"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 John iii. 14).

3. FOR MEDITATION.

Old Testament. The New Relationship with God (Jeremiah xxxi. 31-34).

Headings for Meditation. (a) The inwardness of this relationship. "I will put my law in their inward parts." (b) The personal relationship: "I will be their God." (c) The direct access to God: "They shall all know me." (d) Free forgiveness: "I will forgive their sin. . . ."

GLOSSARY OF BOOKS FOR BIBLE STUDY.

The Bibliography for the use of Teachers of Religious Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) and the Bibliography of the Student Christian Movement (32, Russell Square, W.C.) are both invaluable. This list consists only of those books which are especially suitable for devotional study.

I. VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE.

The Modern Reader's Bible. R. G. Moulton. (Macmillan.)

The Shorter Bible—Old Testament. Kent. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

The Shorter Bible—New Testament. Kent. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

The New Testament. J. Moffatt. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

The New Testament in Modern Speech. Weymouth. (James Clarke.)

A Bible Anthology. The King's Treasuries of Literature Series. (Dent.)

Letters of St. Paul and Hebrews. Arthur S. Way. (Macmillan.)

For Young People and Schools.

The Children's Bible. (Cambridge University Press.)

The Little Children's Bible. (Cambridge University Press.)

The School Edition of the Old Testament. Vol. I. D. Batho and L. Hyde. (S.P.C.K.)

Books of the Bible. General Editor, A. E. Hillard. (Rivington.)

Larger Scripture Manuals. Murby.

Smaller Scripture Manuals. Murby.

The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ. E. Read Mumford. (Longmans, Green & Co.)

School Bible Readings. (Milford.)

2. COMMENTARIES.

- Commentary on the Bible.* A. S. Peake. (Jack.)
The One-Volume Commentary. J. Dummelow. (Macmillan.)
Century Bible. General Editor, W. F. Adeney. (Jack.)
Cambridge Bible for Schools. General Editor, A. F. Kirkpatrick. (Cambridge University Press.)
Westminster Commentaries. (Esp. *Genesis*, Driver; *Exodus*, McNeile; *Pastoral Epistles*, Brown; *Acts*, Rackham.) (Methuen.)
Guild Text Books.
Commentaries on Special Books.
Old Testament.
Isaiah. Vols. I. and II. George Adam Smith. (Hodder and Stoughton.)
The Book of the Twelve Prophets. George Adam Smith. (Hodder and Stoughton.)
The Doctrine of the Prophets. A. F. Kirkpatrick. (Macmillan.)
Prophecy and Religion (Jeremiah). Skinner. (Cambridge University Press.)
The Hymnbook of the Church (Psalter). F. Arnold-Forster. (S.P.C.K.)
New Testament.
The Four Gospels. M. Jones. (S.P.C.K.)
Gospel of St. John. B. F. Westcott. (Murray.)
The Fourth Gospel. R. H. Strachan. (S.C.M.)
Romans. C. Gore. (Murray.)
Ephesians. C. Gore. (Murray.)
Epistles of St. John. C. Gore. (Murray.)
Colossians. M. Jones. (S.P.C.K.)
The Epistle of Priesthood. A. Nairne. (T. & T. Clark.)
The Book of the Revelation. C. Anderson Scott. (Hodder and Stoughton.)
The Tests of Life (Epistles of St. John). R. Law. (T. & T. Clark.)

3. GENERAL OLD TESTAMENT.

- The Faith of the Old Testament.* A. Nairne. (Longmans.)
Everyman's Story of the Old Testament. A. Nairne. (Mowbray.)
The Meaning of the Old Testament. H. Martin. (S.C.M.)
A Study of the Old Testament. Povah. (Longmans.)
Prophecy and the Prophets. T. Robinson. (Studies in Theology.) (Duckworth.)

General New Testament.

- The Faith of the New Testament.* A. Nairne. (Longmans.)
The Theology of the Gospels. J. Moffatt. (Studies in Theology.) (Duckworth.)
The Theology of the Epistles. H. A. A. Kennedy. (Duckworth.)
The Gospel in the Gospels. Du Bose. (Longmans.)
The Incarnation of God. E. Strong. (Longmans.)
The Christian Character. E. Strong. (Longmans.)
The Manhood of the Master. H. E. Fosdick. (S.C.M.)
The Meaning of Prayer. H. E. Fosdick. (S.C.M.)
The Meaning of Faith. H. E. Fosdick. (S.C.M.)
The Meaning of Service. H. E. Fosdick. (S.C.M.)
The Sermon on the Mount. C. Gore. (Murray.)
Pastor Pastorum. H. Latham. (Deighton & Bell.)
Studies in the Character of Christ. C. H. Robinson. (Longmans.)
St. Paul and His Converts. Harrington Lees. (Robert Scott.)

4. GENERAL.

- Self-Training in Meditation.* McNeile. (Heffer.)
The Missionary Genius of the Bible. V. F. Storr. (Hodder and Stoughton.)
The Joy of Bible Study. Harrington Lees. (Longmans.)
Helps to the Study of the Bible. (Oxford University Press.)
The Bible and the Ordinary Man. W. A. Ferguson. (Robert Scott.)

5. LESSON BOOKS FOR TEACHERS.

- "Teachers and Taught" series. (4, Fleet Lane, London.)
 See publications of National Society's Depository (19, Gt. Peter St., Westminster), and Sunday School Institute (Serjeant's Inn, Fleet St.).

6. STUDY CIRCLE BOOKS.

- See Bibliography of Student Christian Movement, 32, Russell Square, W.C. 1; Publications of University Women's Camps for Schoolgirls; and Publications of National Adult School Union, 30, Bloomsbury St., W.C. 1.

7. BOOKS FOR THE UNLEARNED.

- By an Unknown Disciple.* (Hodder and Stoughton.)
About Jesus. Bosworth. (Y.M.C.A.)
Simple Meditations on the Bible. Southam. (S.P.C.K.)
Devotional Thoughts on the Psalms. Randolph. (Mowbray.)

BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Boy Jesus and His Companions. Rufus Jones.
(Macmillan.)

St. Paul the Hero. Rufus Jones. (Macmillan.)

Our Wonderful Bible. G. Hollis. (S.P.C.K.)

Paul the Dauntless. B. Mathews. (Partridge.)

The Bible for Youth. Gillie & Read. (Jack.)

The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ. E. Read Mumford.
(Longmans.)

The Child's Life of Jesus. Steadman. (Jack.)

The Friend of Little Children. J. Sinclair Stevens.
(Blackwell.)

XIV

THE PLACE AND PURPOSE OF THE HOLY COMMUNION IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

I

INTRODUCTION

THE Holy Communion is the heart of corporate worship; it is the Church's ¹ highest act of Sacrifice, Thanksgiving and Adoration. It is really the first and only historic Christian Service, in that it enshrines the sacred rite which our Saviour Christ Himself ordained to be the Sacrament and inspiration of Fellowship. In the ordered worship of the Church, therefore, it stands unique. For the individual worshipper, as for the congregation as a whole, it marks the entrance into the Holy of Holies. Rightly engaged in, this sacred Service is the occasion of an experience of God beyond all expression. For countless numbers all down the Christian centuries the Eucharist has been spiritual food, comfort and joy. It is so still. For these reasons the words of Bishop Hooker win a ready response from many hearts: "Why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this: O my God, thou art true; O my soul, thou art happy!" ²

We would have no other cogitation occupy the mind of the faithful communicant. But since his great

¹ Whenever the word "Church" is used, it is to be understood in terms of the definition in Essay IX, pp. 159-160.

² Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.*, V. lxvii. 12.

experience is to depend upon his apprehension of the Truth of God, we would have him first of all give himself to a serious personal examination of the evidence for the nature and function of this holy Sacrament. For the Holy Communion does not occupy the place which it ought to take in the life and thought of Christian people. We have allowed the beautiful rite which Jesus Christ instituted to be the Sacrament of Fellowship and Unity to become, through our misuse of it, the outstanding symbol of our divisions. We may and do unite with our fellow Christians from all the Churches in conference, and in common action together in furtherance of the moral and social principles of our common Faith. Such times have been for many of us among the happiest experiences of Christian life. But they have often ended in an atmosphere of shame and reproach, for differences in regard to ecclesiastical organisation and institutionalism have prevented a body of people who share Christ's Spirit from expressing and cementing their fellowship in His service in the one natural and obvious way. These things constitute a challenge to every one of us, and the purpose of the present essay is to urge upon all the need for a re-examination of beliefs and traditions about the Lord's Supper in the interests of corporate and personal Christianity. The essay is written primarily for "men and women in the pew," and for their friends who for any reason do not join them in sacramental worship. Attention is directed chiefly to simple outstanding facts and to fundamental Christian principles. The subject is divided into two sections, not with a view to either part being read or considered as complete in itself, but in order that what is mainly a simple historical enquiry into origins may be kept distinct from an attempt to indicate something of the wonder of the Sacrament, and its place in the practical and spiritual life of the Christian.

The apostolic writers reiterate the demand that we should test and prove the fundamentals of our Faith, but that is a call to which to-day but few respond.¹ It is so much easier to accept our ideas about things upon the authority of a teacher, and our theories upon the recommendation of a friend who has "found them helpful." If we were asked how we had come by our faith (and it is a question which every man must face as in the sight of God), many would in truth be bound to answer: "Alas, Master, it was borrowed." The result is seen in the astonishing ignorance of the mass of Church-people about the central and elementary facts in Christ's outlook and teaching. This ignorance extends to the highest act of Christian worship with most harmful results. Many people are not at all clear as to what was the special significance with which the Lord's last Supper with His friends was charged. They are only acquainted with the ideas with which the Sacrament has been overlaid during a long period of "development." It was essentially a simple thing which Jesus imparted to His disciples to be the inspiration and unifying symbol of their life and service. With the simplicity which marks all that is truly great, He made use of the universal sacramental principle to bring home to the minds of all men the purpose and meaning of God's redeeming Love. Until a man has gone back to the Upper Room to learn at the feet of the Lord Himself the meaning of His Sacrament, he cannot use it aright, nor penetrate to its richness.

The characteristic appeal of Evangelicalism is to the New Testament—"the record, white-hot out of human hearts, of the Christian experience at its highest."²

¹ 1 Thess. v. 21; 1 Corinthians x. 15; Romans xii. 2; 1 John iv. 1; James i. 3.

² F. R. Barry, *One Clear Call*, p. 13.

There, and there alone is to be found a full and final statement of all Christian essentials. There will be found also all that is necessary for the building up of a true and rich eucharistic doctrine and practice. This of course does not deny the need or validity of change and development in matters concerning the setting and circumstances of the Sacrament in altered conditions. The appeal to the New Testament is not to a series of proof texts, but to the Mind of Christ therein fully revealed, as providing the only criterion by which all that claims to be legitimate development must be judged. All the irrelevant questions which surround, and often almost obscure, the heart of the Sacrament, are seen at their true value against the background of original Christian faith and experience. The matters which are chiefly debated and discussed with so much casuistry among the ecclesiastically minded need occasion little perplexity to the average Christian who is willing to study his New Testament, with common sense, and in dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

But the course which is here suggested is in some quarters regarded as an inversion of the right method of procedure. It is urged, that, in the case of an institution such as the Holy Communion which has had a long history, its meaning cannot be learnt from the study of its beginnings, any more than a tree can be understood from an examination of the seed-germ from which it grew. This is an argument which many minds find singularly attractive. By its means every sort of development in Christendom can in turn be justified. No argument could be more fallacious when applied to the Holy Communion. We can only judge the Sacrament by its fruits at the present day, and deem those fruits to be good, if we can assume that all development

in its history has been true development. The full-grown oak tree tells us more about itself than does the acorn, but in that case we can safely assume that all development as between the acorn and the tree has been true development. That we cannot assume in the history of the Sacrament. In the latter case what is claimed as development is often sheer transformation. The simile of the seed and the tree possesses more than the normal deficiency of metaphor when it is applied to the Holy Communion. It implies that the Sacrament as founded by the Lord and as practised by the groups of Christians in the house-churches of Jerusalem and elsewhere, was merely a germ-rite—a Sacrament in embryo. But the Lord when He instituted the great Christian Symbol performed certain acts and gave clear and positive teaching—teaching which in essence and meaning was incapable of development. And we may not doubt that the subsequent homely celebrations following the evening meal week by week, or night by night, brought to those who partook of the elements according to Christ's word, everything that the Sacrament can bring of God to man. Therefore, for all that is vital to a right understanding and use of the Sacrament the evidence of the New Testament stands complete and final.

THE APPROACH TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

Before the place which the Eucharist should take in the life of the Christian can profitably be considered, the doctrinal significance of the Sacrament must briefly be examined in the light of the original records. Right use depends very largely upon a clearly understood doctrine related to a living faith. The effectiveness of the Sacra-

ment as a symbol and channel of Divine Grace does not, and cannot, depend upon any prescribed formulæ, or any exclusive human agency. It does depend upon the measure of the faith, which, in conscious response to the communication of God's Grace, receives the Gift which is offered. And that vital faith must be able to "give an account of itself to reason, and justify itself to conscience." The recollection of a few obvious but important facts must characterise the approach to the New Testament in this matter. It must be remembered, first of all, that the Holy Communion cannot be understood apart from the life and teaching of the Lord. It is not an isolated rite. It is not an alternative way of life, added at the last, to the Way which He had all along laid down. On the contrary, it illuminates the Lord's teaching, and receives illumination from His life. It gives perfect expression to the purpose of the Incarnation. Christ did not come to purify or reform Jewish institutionalism. He did not concern Himself with the elaborate sacrificial system which had grown up from the time of Ezekiel. He came to perfect and to complete the work of His predecessors, the great ethical prophets of old. Not religious institutions, not organisations and priest-hoods, but spiritual religion was His one interest and aim. His religion was in complete agreement at all points with that of the prophets who preceded Him, and with the nature of the Father whom He revealed. He therefore chose as the type of His new Sacrament, not one of the great priestly sacrifices of the Temple, but that service which retained the character of a communion meal, the Passover, which was enacted at home, at which the head of the house was minister. It is against the background of Christ's prophetic teaching as to the moral and ethical character of the relationship between

God and men that the Sacrament of spiritual fellowship is to be studied.

Then there is another fact of outstanding importance for the origin of the Sacrament, and this is frequently overlooked, or not given its full value; it is its intensely Jewish element. All who joined in that last Supper were loyal Jews. It will appear later how vital this is to the understanding of what took place. The minds of Christ and His friends were dominated by Passover thoughts. The Supper itself took the place of the actual Passover which was celebrated on the evening of the Crucifixion. The relation, then, between the Jewish feast and the Lord's Supper is designedly close.¹ So far as was possible, Passover ritual was observed at the Supper, and the great ideas of the Passover, "Redemption" and "Covenant," that is, Deliverance, and Relationship with God, are taken over into the Christian Sacrament.

It is also still necessary to remind ourselves that the New Testament, as well as the Old, is an Eastern book. The language is often the picture language of the East. It loves to employ paradox and hyperbole. Just as it is easy to miss the central lesson of a parable by concentrating upon each of the details in the picture in turn, so is it easy to miss the supreme meaning of the Lord's Supper by subjecting the language used at the Institution to analytical examination, and by reading the account as if it were a legal document. The Lord has given to us here not a miniature which requires a magnifying glass

¹ Cp. R. H. Kennett, *The Last Supper*, pp. 32 ff. It has also been suggested that the original Lord's Supper may have been the *Kiddush*—a common meal with blessing of bread and cup—celebrated among the Jews at the beginning of the Sabbath, and on the eve of great feasts. Parallelism has been shown to exist between this rite and its prayers, and the account of the Eucharist in the *Didache*.

to discover its full beauty, but a massive and glowing picture of the Love of God.

THE REAL PRESENCE

Let us consider some of the matters in connection with which there is considerable variation of belief. With regard to conceptions of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist, all theories as to that Presence must be governed by the gracious promises which Christian experience continually verifies: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age" . . . "where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I." ¹ There can be only one Presence of our Blessed Lord, and that a spiritual Presence. The commonly used term "special presence" was described to the writer some years ago by the late Professor Gwatkin as "philosophic nonsense." What meaning can the phrase possess when applied to the Christ? Our conception of His Presence at the Sacrament must be in agreement with His Presence in the Upper Room. He was not then "specially present," but He was present for a special purpose. For the same special purpose He is really present whenever Christians meet together in love and faith to eat the Bread and to drink the Cup in memory of the Lord. But He is just as really present also, as He promised to be, with the two or three wherever they have met "in His Name." As He was present then, so is He present now. Then He reclined among His friends; now He is present among the worshipping congregation. As He was present throughout the last meal, so is He present throughout the whole Communion service. His Presence

¹ Matthew xxviii. 20; xviii. 20.

then and now is not to be thought of as specially connected with, or locally attached to, bread and wine.

Consider now the words: "This is My body." These words in reference to the bread and the wine did not relate to the actual Body of the Lord then with His disciples: they cannot have referred to His glorified body, which was not yet in existence.¹ For the disciples the words can only have meant "this bread is a symbol of—represents—My body." What the Lord intended those words to mean for the Twelve they must mean for us and for all time. His meaning is incapable of change or augmentation. If anything else is required to show that what the Lord blessed and gave, and what His disciples received, was bread and wine from the supper they were eating (charged, however, with the deepest spiritual significance), it is found in the fact that the Lord Himself ate and drank the elements. The language of the accounts of the Institution imply this, the custom of the Passover meal requires it.² The Pauline phrase, "the Lord's table," suggests it. But this is one of the Gospel facts in connection with the Lord's Supper which needs to be realised in all its implications. He ate and drank what He gave to them—bread and wine. The elements cannot in any sense have become Himself. Had the disciples interpreted the words "this is My blood" in any literal way, they, as good Jews, would have revolted from the suggestion that they should commit the cardinal sin under the Divine Law and drink blood, even though their Master and Messiah bade them do so. Since they did eat and drink, it follows that they understood the language in its figurative sense.³

¹ V. F. Storr, *The Real Presence*, p. 3.

² See A. Plummer, *St. Luke (Int. Crit. Comm.)*, pp. 495-497.

³ R. H. Kennett, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

St. Paul, also a good Jew, does not and could not, in reference to the Lord's Supper, speak of eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of Christ. Sacramental language makes use of such phrases because the union effected in the Sacrament between the Lord and the disciple, by faith, is so real that experience has demanded such terms by which to express itself. Many, however, who make use of sacramental language fail to remember that it is the language of metaphor representing an ineffable experience. It is used to express something of that which takes place when, by an act of self-identification with the Spirit of Jesus, the door of personality is opened to the full influence of His Personality. If we could eat the actual Body and drink the Blood of Christ these could not feed or strengthen our spiritual life. For the thoughtless or uneducated the unguarded use of such language almost inevitably leads to belief in identification of the Body and Blood of Christ with the elements of bread and wine. Such an identification is never made in the New Testament. The language of the sixth chapter of St. John is perhaps already in the mind of the reader. In manuals of devotion, sermons, and instructions upon the Holy Communion, it is very generally assumed that the teaching of this chapter is our Lord's specific teaching about the Eucharist. This is an assumption which is unjustified for a number of reasons. In the first place, we cannot assume in the case of this or any other of the speeches in the Fourth Gospel, that the evangelist has reproduced the actual words of the Lord. Next, if we assume that the evangelist himself is a "high sacramentalist" to whom we owe directly or indirectly the most definite sacramental teaching in the New Testament, how are we to account for the fact that he is the one Gospel writer who deliberately omits the narrative of the Insti-

tution and substitutes for it a symbolic rite of another order? But we may accept the Johannine teaching as authentic teaching of Jesus and still be in very good company when we dissociate it from reference to the Eucharist. "It is in the highest degree unlikely that He was thinking only or chiefly of participation in a Sacrament which was not to begin till after His death. The Greek Fathers, as Waterland and Jeremy Taylor show, are nearly all against the Eucharistic reference."¹ The teaching, if genuine, would seem to have a much wider and more metaphorical sphere of meaning than the Eucharist. The crux of the teaching is found in the words of v. 63, "it is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no use." In a very fresh examination of this chapter Professor Moffatt shows that the evangelist's attitude to the Lord's Supper may be one of opposition to the developing sacramental doctrine of the Church of his time, or it may be "spiritualisation" of crude sacramental thought and language, or again it may be that of indifference. If, as is at least possible, the *agape*—the "love-feast"—the evening common meal was, for the author of the Fourth Gospel, the normal and healthy guarantee of fellowship with the Lord, we have a satisfactory explanation of the teaching. The author is then "the first of the mystics or quietists who attached no specific significance to the Supper as a means of communion with God. He is not embarrassed by the presence of sacraments in the church. He feels free, by his faith, to use their very language for his own ends. The paradoxical and defiant way in which the sacramental language is employed points to the serene freedom with which he regarded the sacrament itself, not as the sole or supreme means of enjoying communion, but, perhaps at most, as

¹ W. R. Inge, in *Contentio Veritatis*, p. 283 (footnote).

one traditional rite connected with the experience. . . . Like a genuine mystic he has stated this truth in terms of daring realism, simply because these terms had no longer for him any vital connection with the literal actions; communion for him was infinitely wider than eucharistic experiences. And finally, to prevent misconception, he adds the clue in the closing paragraph: 'The Spirit gives life; the words I have spoken to you, they are Spirit and life.' . . . This is the apex of the dialogue, and it determines the sense in which the writer intends the slope of the preceding argument to be viewed. . . . It is a modern preconception which leads us to expect evidence in the early Church for a widespread devotion to the Eucharist as the centre of Christian worship and the indispensable rite of faith. There were evidently circles where it lay only on the circumference of piety, and those circles, sometimes, as in the case of the Johannine, of semi-mystical character, often voiced types of the finest piety native to the early Church."¹

Whether in the now discredited philosophical theory of Transubstantiation, or in any of the less absolute statements of the connection or union of the elements with the Body or Personality of the Lord, the nature of the Sacrament is overthrown, and the relation of God to matter is violated. Unless sacramental language is used with full appreciation of its nature and limitations, there results a dangerous confusion between the highest spiritual conceptions of Christianity and ideas which belong to the debased religions of far-off ages. It is such a confusion which has led in modern eucharistic practice to the evolution of usages of the Blessed Sacrament which are not only foreign to original Christianity, but also, in

¹ J. Moffatt, "The Lord's Supper in the Fourth Gospel," *Expositor* (eighth series), vol. vi.

the last analysis, incompatible with the Nature of God revealed in His Son. It is impossible to think of the Apostles in the Upper Room making acts of adoration before the bread and wine which the Lord gave to them to eat and drink, not to worship. But confusion of the symbols with what they symbolise has in fact led to the practice of Reservation for the purpose of adoration. It is the dulness of blinded sight "which seeks to assure itself that Christ, whom it does not see, is yet really present because something else is present which it can see."¹ The far-reaching results of the practice upon spiritual religion are seen in the case of those, who, accustomed to think of the Lord as present in, or under the form of, the Wafer, and to say their prayers before the Tabernacle, confess that it is almost impossible for them to worship in a Church where the Sacrament is not for this purpose reserved. A false theory of the Real Presence thus leads to a very tragic experience of a Real Absence.² Many of those who defend the practice of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament do so on psychological or emotional grounds, claiming that such a use of the Sacrament is by these reasons justified. But this introduces a very uncertain criterion of authority. Unless intellect and reason, informed by the teaching of Christ, are in harmony with the will and the emotions, the latter may fulfil their desires at the expense of truth. Few who have attended devotions in connection with Exposition and Benediction could fail to be impressed by the intentness of the worshippers and the atmosphere of reverence pervading the services. Very arresting also is the sight of a few earnest souls in prayer before the Tabernacle, and we are warned by those who advocate

¹ J. G. Simpson, *Fact and Faith*, p. 174.

² See *The Review of the Churches*, April 1924, pp. 220-221.

these modern extensions of sacramental worship of the harm which might be done, if these practices were suppressed, to those who find them a help in their devotional life. At the same time it must be recognised that it is quite possible, as the history of religion shows abundantly, to adopt methods of devotion which, while producing immediate and impressive results, fail ultimately in the tests of truth and of spiritual life as a whole. Moreover, the conception of prayer, or any form of adoration, as being chiefly a means of securing help for those who offer it, is at least inadequate. The supreme motive in Christian worship is not man's need, but God's nature: His beauty, truth and goodness, His holiness and His love. And spiritual worship, which alone is acceptable to God, is not something which can be simplified by material means: it is a quest which calls us ever more and more away from such supports and helps to higher levels of adventure which make increasing demands upon the whole personality.

FASTING COMMUNION, AND NON-COMMUNICATING ATTENDANCE

In this connection must briefly be noticed two closely allied practices with which most communicants are brought face to face at one time or another. Although both are perhaps defensible in certain special circumstances, they must, when generally carried out, make void the word of God through tradition. Neither practice receives any support or justification from the record of the first period of Christian life.

The layman whose mind has not been diverted into ecclesiastical habits of thought will appreciate the fact that fasting can never be a necessary or essential con-

dition for Communion, since the Lord founded the Rite at the end of an evening meal, and as part of the ordinary evening meal the earliest Christian Society observed it. It has become the almost general custom of the Church of England to have Communion early in the morning, and Fasting Communion is earnestly enjoined by many parish priests. But there is no special sacredness about any particular hour except the hallowed associations which afford special sanctions to Evening Communion. The right time for Communion is a subject which perplexes many clergy and laity alike, though usually for different reasons. It may be that the future will see a widespread return to the Lord's Supper at its earliest and most natural time.¹ Especially under modern conditions of life there will always be many for whom the necessary time, quiet and opportunity will only be possible in the evening. The Sacrament, like the Sabbath, was made for man. The right time for Communion is that when the communicant is best fitted and able to worship in spirit and in reality. The practice of Fasting Communion lacks any apostolic authority. It is of early origin, but arose in the period when the first glow of clear spiritual apprehension was waning. Those who can allow themselves to think of receiving the very Body and Blood of Christ into their mouths usually think that no other food should recently have passed their lips. We enter here upon a circle of ideas with which the Christianity of the New Testament has nothing whatever to do. The Jewish Church of our Lord's day was deeply concerned with various "food laws," and enforced stringent rules as to what might or might not be eaten by worshippers in certain circumstances. Jesus cut at

¹ Bishop Neville Talbot (Archbishop's Report: *The Worship of the Church*, p. 40).

the root of the system with a single sentence: "Whatsoever from without goeth into a man it cannot defile him, because it goeth not into his heart but into his belly." ¹ St. Paul, faced by the difficulties among the members of the Church in Corinth, some of whom regarded the Lord's Supper as an occasion for gluttony and drunkenness, bids them, if they are hungry, take their own suppers at home first, in order that they may observe the Lord's Supper worthily.² Many who do not hold extreme views of the Sacrament find the practice and discipline of fasting a useful aid to devotion. For others it renders spiritual concentration physically impossible. Let every man decide for himself, and be fully persuaded in his own mind. The question of merit does not enter into the matter; we really must endeavour to think as Christians and not as pagans! We must also remember that the Church of England ignores the practice in all her dogmatic statements upon the Holy Communion, and does not require of any man a mode of preparation so subversive of original Christian custom. In view of the data of the New Testament, the appeal to "Catholic rule" in this question serves to throw into relief the chasm which so often separates that which is "Catholic" from that which is Christian.

Non-communicating attendance is partly due to literal interpretation of sacramental language, and partly the result of an attempt to reintroduce into the Communion Service the salient features of the Mass. If, on the one hand, fasting is regarded as a necessary preparation for Communion, and if, on the other hand, the principal Service of the day is Mass at 10 or 11 o'clock, that service being regarded primarily as one in which the priest acts on behalf of the assembled Church in offering a sacrifice,

¹ Mark vii. 18.

² 1 Corinthians xi. 34.

then non-communicating attendance on a large scale naturally follows. But the same Lord who instituted His Sacrament after Supper said also: "Take, eat": "Drink YE ALL." "Development" which renders practically impossible obedience to the Lord's command stands self-condemned whatever be the authority to which it lays claim.

THE DETERIORATION OF EUCHARISTIC DOCTRINE

The foregoing considerations imply that much present-day eucharistic doctrine and practice find but little support or justification in the Mind of Christ. To the impartial enquirer that is a conclusion which it is impossible to avoid. We are a long way down the course of a process which, although customarily described as development, cannot in truth be so regarded. We can here only very briefly indicate how this came about.

Students of primitive Christian literature are conscious of the fact that between the writings of the New Testament which can unquestionably lay claim to belong to the apostolic age, and those of the sub-apostolic age, there is a great gulf fixed. In crossing that gulf we pass from a higher to a lower level. The descent is general in all that concerns essential Christianity. Perhaps the most significant sign of the change is the absence in the sub-apostolic age of the original Spirit-consciousness. We no longer feel the inspiration of a Spirit-filled community. The Church is making terms with the world, and Christianity is becoming secularised. This process was greatly accelerated later, when, following the example of chieftains and Emperors who became nominally Christian, thousands of heathen flooded the Church. Their motives were no doubt in many cases high and

praiseworthy, but the great irruption was fraught with many dangers. The Church was quite unable to grapple with the vast need for teaching which suddenly arose. Unable to impart to crowds of converts the Christian standard in relation to every department of life and thought, the Church received the impress of the pagan mind to an extent which even yet is not fully realised. It was not unusual for men of middle age to become leaders in the Church within a very short time of their conversion. Men who had been brought up in the midst of heathen religions, and trained under the legal scheme which covered Roman life, could not readily dissociate themselves from their old habits of thought. When they proved to be strong and forceful leaders their influence was all the greater, but their contribution to Christian thought was, from the nature of the case, frequently disastrous. A new theory of Church and Ministry represents the first great effect of Latin thought upon Christian history. It is associated chiefly with the work of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage in North Africa, who, converted in 246 A.D., was raised to the episcopate three years later. Cyprian had been a heathen until middle life, and was noted for his learning, eloquence and legal attainments. Cyprian was a saint; but in his conception of religion he remained more than half heathen. He claimed for the bishop no longer a purely eucharistic, but actually a sacrificing, priesthood. His ideas run clean contrary to the thought and terminology of the New Testament and seem to be drawn from the heathen atmosphere he had breathed for so long. The danger of his new theory, which hinged on the nature of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is obscured for many by reason of the complete sincerity and Christian charity of the man himself. Nevertheless, his theory, which had a deter-

mining effect on Christianity from the third century to the Reformation, is in itself "nothing less than a recast of the Gospel in heathen moulds."¹ The Communion was turned into a sacrifice, and all the technical language of sacrificing priesthood, so significantly absent from every reference to Christian ministers in the New Testament, was introduced. Christianity, the Religion of the Spirit, was well on the way to become a new Judaism, a religion of Law and of ecclesiastical authority.

It is necessary to have these facts in mind in order to judge rightly the value of the great Liturgies for our ideas of the Sacrament. Practically all the Liturgies emanate from the time when Christianity was becoming deeply coloured by pagan thought, and the original meaning and purpose of the Lord's Supper had been over-shadowed. The Liturgies are valuable as illustrating the way in which the Eucharist was celebrated, and the ideas which surrounded it, in the ages to which they belong. They are also the source of many exquisite prayers, and some of the most Catholic acts of devotion. But though we may use a Liturgy based on the ancient models, we have to go behind them for our doctrinal foundation. It is in favour of the early date of the *Didache*, or "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," that its references to the Eucharist reflect so clearly the thought and teaching of the New Testament itself.²

English Churchmen may thank God for the Liturgy which the Reformation gave to us. It preserves the best and truest elements of the ancient Offices, and can claim direct New Testament evidence for the points at which it deviates from its predecessors. It is deficient in nothing which is essential to primitive Catholic faith;

¹ H. M. Gwatkin, *Early Church History*, Vol. II, p. 274.

² *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, ix, x.

and those who challenge its sufficiency usually do so because Cranmer and his colleagues rightly excluded from the Liturgy elements which, although they had gained a wide acceptance, were found to be incompatible with the fresh appreciation of Christianity which the Renaissance had brought with it. At the same time many of us desire to see the English Liturgy enriched and adapted to the needs of Christian thought and life to-day. We do not desire to see the work of the Reformation undone in this respect, by conforming our Service to the theories either of the traditional "Eastern" or "Western" liturgical types. One of the most valuable characteristics of our Service is its refusal to identify the Presence of Christ with any theory of the Sacrament. In this it represents the attitude of the great Anglican Fathers.

It is through the processes of reasoning which followed the loss of the first strong faith that Christ's Presence came to be regarded as in some way "attached" to the consecrated elements of bread and wine. This new emphasis is greatly to be regretted, for concentration upon the material elements diverts attention from the acts which stress the personal aspect of the Sacrament. Neither can any acts be rightly added to those of the Lord: breaking, blessing, giving, taking. It is the acts, not the bread and wine, which are of first importance. "Do this in remembrance of Me"; "Take, eat"; "Drink ye"; "As oft as ye do eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death." It is here that the function of the Sacrament is seen: it exhibits the intimate contact and vital communication between the soul and Christ.

The process of deterioration which has been glanced at in this section is an easily verifiable fact of history. It may frankly be admitted by all those whose theory of

the Church does not require them to regard all that came to pass between the day of Pentecost and the Reformation as directly inspired by the Holy Spirit. But it has resulted in the establishment of a eucharistic worship, and the construction of a sacramental theology remote from the general scheme of original Christianity. This worship and theology direct the attention to the narrow area of the bread and wine, and what they by consecration may become. As the result come beliefs which are magical in character (in spite of all disclaimers), and inconsistent with the genius of the New Testament. Moreover they lead inevitably "to a cultus of the Sacrament which is an excrescence upon apostolic Christianity, draws the mind away from the historic Gospel, and mars the wholeness and simplicity of the apostolic faith."¹ Christian people will always have the forms of worship which they deserve. When Churchpeople begin steadily to test their faith and practice for themselves by the standard of the Mind of Christ, Prayer Book Revision will not be in danger of making shipwreck upon the rocks of mediævalism. We shall have the needed modifications and additions, but through them all, and behind them all, will be Christ's conception of the Father, His nature, His method and His truth.

II

UNION WITH CHRIST

The New Testament clearly regards mystical union with Christ as being the goal and consummation of all Christian experience. It assumes that this sublime union

¹ J. G. Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

is possible for all. St. Paul, in a phrase which he has made peculiarly his own, describes the highest Christian experience as being "in Christ." Yet the Sacrament certainly is not regarded as the unique means of attaining to union with the Lord; its general purpose and function are to be traced in other directions. The secret of mystical union with the Lord is the secret of Christianity itself: it is faith. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" . . . "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and, that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me."¹ This language is scarcely consistent with that of modern devotion, which speaks of Christ as present "in this Holy Sacrament" and as "the prisoner of the Tabernacle." The Sacrament was not in the first days a substitute for the life—the "good fight"—of faith. There is no trace of its being regarded as a thing apart. It is not a short cut to holiness. It occupies an important place within the life of faith as a whole, but has no meaning or efficacy apart from that life.

When we ask: What place did the Sacrament take at the first in the life of the individual disciple? the New Testament gives no direct answer. It never approaches the subject from the individual point of view at all. This fact throws into relief the great reality in the light of which the Sacrament is to be understood—the Fellowship of believers which has God at its centre. The outstanding experience which followed the Resurrection and was deepened infinitely at Pentecost was this: that the fellowship which the disciples had enjoyed with the Lord, and which they believed to have ended with the Crucifixion, was

¹ Gal. ii. 20.

renewed. It was with the Jesus they had known that they were now again most certainly in fellowship. The repeated "this Jesus" in Peter's first public utterance in Jerusalem is most significant.¹ As the result of the Apostle's preaching, some three thousand people joined the little company of disciples that day, and continued "steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers."² It is against the background of the Fellowship, the most signal evidence of supernatural life amongst men, that the purpose of the Sacrament receives illumination. The Sacrament is for the Fellowship rather than for the individual, and it is only as a member of the Fellowship that the individual can attain its blessings and fulfil its requirements.

REMEMBRANCE

Among the many personal aspects of the Lord's Supper as applied to the practical life of each member of the Fellowship, that of Remembrance occupies a unique place. For this express purpose alone did the Lord enjoin the perpetuation of that which He instituted on the night in which He was being delivered up: "This do in remembrance of me." This, of course, must be the foundation of the sacramental life. In so far as we respond to that request, with every part of our personality, we shall enter into the full meaning and spiritual power of the Sacrament. We think of His request, and we do what He asked us to do. The Sacraments are not only "badges and tokens," but they are these. In participating in the Lord's Supper we pledge our *sacramentum*, our oath of allegiance to our King, putting into visibility in a public way our desire and intention to live

¹ Acts ii. 32, 36.

² Acts ii. 42.

and to fight as Christ's faithful soldiers and servants against all that opposes the extension of His Kingdom. This may be the lowest ground, but it constitutes a real reason for regular and frequent acts of Communion, even on the part of those who have not as yet attained to a fuller mystical experience.

But the Service of Holy Communion is a call to a full and intense act of recollection. "Remember Jesus Christ" is an apostolic injunction to us all, and to carry it out consistently is the way to right thinking and right living. We remember Him most effectually by the means which He Himself appointed for us. At every Communion the mind should be directed, firstly, back to the Upper Room. We must recollect the circumstances of that evening meal. The meal idea is not one of the accidents of the Sacrament, but its very essence. According to almost universal ancient belief those who ate and drank together were, by the very act, tied to one another by a bond of friendship and mutual obligation. This belief entered deeply into the heart of the Semitic religion which prepared the way for the religion of Jesus. Divine help was regarded as belonging to the community as a whole, and not to each man in his private concerns and interests. This found expression in public acts of worship in which all the members of the community met together at the table of their God and so renewed the sense that He and they were altogether one.¹ This belief, completely spiritualised, was taken over into Christianity, and the emphasis laid upon unity of the Fellowship of which the Lord's Supper was the inspiration and symbol: "We who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread."² We come, then, to the Holy

¹ Cp. W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, pp. 265, 266.

² 1 Corinthians x. 17.

Communion to eat bread together as the friends of Jesus Christ, guests at the Table of the unseen but present Lord.

FORGIVENESS

But our act of remembrance proceeds to the vital meaning of the Symbols. The bread broken and the wine poured out represent the sacrificial offering of the Lord's life consummated in and through His death. Behind the Sacrament is the Cross; and this has been fully realised by those who have built up the Anglican doctrine of the Eucharist. The Cross is the eternal picture of what it cost God to bring home to the minds and hearts of men the "New Covenant," the true nature of their relationship to God which it was the purpose of the Incarnation to make known. We rightly think of the Lord's Supper as the "Sacrament of our Redemption," and although later in the Service we lift up our hearts to the Ascended Lord, we begin by taking our place at the foot of the Cross. "The Eucharist is the communion of the Passion. If it were not so, it would perhaps be a communion of hope and joy to those who have not sinned. It would not be so to those who have felt the power of sin."¹ In our Liturgy the aspect of the Lord's Supper as a sacrament of our forgiveness is very prominent. Self-examination is followed by the "burning words" of the Confession; the solemn Absolution leads to the recollection of Christ's coming to save us, and of His power to save to the uttermost. Then the Prayer of Consecration with the manual acts directs attention to the Cross; acts and words unite in revealing to us the sinfulness of sin and the wonder of God's love.

¹ W. R. Inge, *All Saints Sermons*, p. 156.

But this is not the end. The Sacred Symbols of our forgiveness are put into our hands as by the Saviour Himself. "Take and eat this. . . . Drink this . . . in remembrance that Christ died for thee." So does each one of us accept the signs and seals of our forgiveness and restoration, and we leave the Table of the Lord fitted to engage in the further acts of self-offering, praise and realisation of the Lord's Presence with His Church. With a right appreciation of that which the Elements signify, and an active faith, the Holy Communion is for the worshipper an absolute assurance of divine forgiveness. In this holy Service the Christian doctrine and practice of Confession and Absolution are found in perfect expression and efficacy.

THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

Until the communion of priest and people has taken place, our Liturgy looks back to the one "full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice" once for all offered by Christ in the days of His flesh. That Sacrifice need not, cannot, be repeated or re-enacted, yet there remains a real sacrifice to be offered by the Church in the Holy Eucharist. What is this sacrifice? It is when we study our Liturgy to find the answer to the question that we realise how completely Cranmer "turned the Mass into a Communion." From our Service the "Sacrifice of the Mass" has been excluded, and if the offering of that Sacrifice is the chief function of the Christian priest, then Pope Leo XIII was fully justified in his charge that Anglican Orders are invalid, although his premises also invalidate all "Orders" prior to the fourth century.¹ What is the "Sacrifice of

¹ H. B. Swete, Lecture on the Bull *Apostolicæ Curæ*, p. 19.

the Mass"? It is "that the priest, having (after prayer and by God's grace) duly and legitimately made present the Body and Blood of our Lord, proceeds then and there in the name of the congregation to offer this acceptable sacrifice to God the Father in memory of, and in representation of, Calvary."¹ The eucharistic Sacrifice is, on this Catholic theory, centred in the bread and wine. How widely different is the genius of the English Liturgy. Cranmer, influenced as he was by some of the more drastic Protestant reformers, and by St. Augustine, but chiefly by his study of the New Testament, places the supreme moment of Sacrifice after the communion of priest and people. It is not the bread and wine which are offered as a Sacrifice by the priest, either in their own proper substances, or as representing the Body and Blood of the Lord. For the Sacrifice of the English Communion Service is this: the congregation, "having confessed, been shriven, having assisted at a due consecration of the bread and wine, and finally having received their own portion, do then and there offer unto God themselves, their souls and bodies, to be a reasonable sacrifice."² Here is a theory of eucharistic Sacrifice entirely consonant with the spirit and express teaching of the New Testament. Every act of Communion affords us an opportunity for the exercise of the universal Christian Priesthood which belongs to all by virtue of their membership in Christ. It is for us to use that occasion to the full, to renew in the presence of the Lord our self-dedication to Him and to His purposes for the world. Everything which comes within the scope of "Christian service" is joyfully accepted, and we go out from our communion with the Lord with a fresh vision and new power to carry

¹ F. C. Burkitt, *Eucharist and Sacrifice*, p. 22.

² F. C. Burkitt, *ibid.*

out the privileges and responsibilities of our discipleship. The worshipper himself is the sacrifice as he offers himself in every affair and interest of daily life, which is his "spiritual worship." The Christian life is worship of the highest kind, and transcends every material sacrifice, because it actually fulfils the principle of which sacrifice is a symbol. The words of the Lord, "Do this in remembrance of me," do bear a sacrificial meaning in that, as He lived His life and laid it down for us, so should we give ourselves to Him in the service of God and our fellow-men.

THANKSGIVING

The Holy Communion is indeed the Church's Eucharist, or "thanksgiving." The note of thanksgiving is perhaps not sufficiently prominent in our daily Offices, which are mainly of a petitionary character. In our highest act of public worship that deficiency is redressed. Immediately after the Comfortable Words we lift up our hearts into the heavenly places, and in communion with the faithful departed, the great fellowship of the saints above, we offer thanks to God for Himself and for His glory which fills the universe. And this act of corporate adoration is framed in sentences of unsurpassed beauty of language. After Communion there comes a Prayer of Thanksgiving, splendid in its comprehensiveness and practical direction. It is to be regretted that this fine act of Praise is, in our present Book of Common Prayer, set only as an alternative to the Prayer of Oblation, a weakness which the process of Prayer Book Revision will doubtless remedy. This leads on to a rich outburst of praise and adoration in the Gloria, a morning hymn of the early Eastern Church. And thus the last corporate act in the Eucharist is, as is fitting, one of thanksgiving.

COMMUNION WITH THE LORD

There is a phrase in the Prayer of Thanksgiving which is of first importance in relation to the sacramental life. In it we thank God who does " vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of [His] Son our Saviour Jesus Christ." Here, in sacramental language, it is assumed that we who have participated in the bread and wine, have, by faith, " fed upon Christ," that is, we have really entered into communion with Him. All other aspects of the Service are, in a sense, secondary to this; all are important elements in our supreme act of adoration, but they in turn depend upon realised intercourse with the Lord. Here, if anywhere, in the most Christian of all our Services, we must attain to religious reality. " Where lies the essence of the sacramental? It is in fact—in the expression of the English High Churchmen—the ' real presence,' the real presence of the transcendent and holy in its very nature in adoration and fellowship, so as to be laid hold of and enjoyed in present possession. No form of devotion which does not offer or achieve this mystery for the worshipper can be perfect or give lasting contentment to a religious mind." ¹ Our contact with the Crucified and Risen Lord is to be so immediate, so vital, that we come to know we are " in Him, and He in us." But this sense of union must be effected by a healthy and entirely spiritual means. It cannot, so to speak, be brought about mechanically or magically. It can only be achieved as the result of an unreserved venture of faith. Credulity may fortify itself by relying entirely upon the Symbols, or upon the Celebrant as exercising a unique " grace " or power.

¹ R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 219.

Faith relies upon nothing less or other than Jesus Christ its author. The relation of the bread and wine to the living faith of the worshipper may be likened to that of the wireless instrument to the message. The sacred elements are the means by which faith is enabled instantly to touch the Lord. It uses the symbols as the instruments of its great outward leap: it does not concentrate its attention upon them. Faith has not thought of the Lord as coming at any point in the Service, and it does not contemplate His quick departure. Faith has realised His presence throughout the Service. Faith has been stimulated and exercised by each successive step in the preparation which has led up to the reception of the bread and wine, consecrated for their holy purpose, and now it reposes in its fulfilment: Christ Himself dwells in our hearts by faith. The whole man—will, reason and emotions—have been engaged at their highest powers; there has been no dissociation in the personality of the worshipper. Thus does the Sacrament fulfil within the life of faith the purpose for which the Lord created it. Eucharistic doctrine which shall be at once vital, and in true relation to the Christian Faith as a whole, can only be built up upon these two foundations: the reality of Christ's Presence at the Eucharist, and His essential independence of the elements.¹

It is not denied that there are many who have enjoyed the true mystical experience, and do enjoy it, apart from the use of the Holy Communion. But while the mystic may feel no loss even if deprived of the sacramental means of grace for long periods, he can never disparage those means nor willingly neglect to use them, if he appreciates the fact that they can bring to him the same exalted and indescribable experience of the divine

¹ See Hooker, *op. cit.*, V. lxvii. 6.

indwelling, not as an individual but as a member of the Christian Fellowship and for Fellowship purposes. There are also very many quite regular communicants who have not found the Communion to be for them an occasion of realised union with the Lord. They need not despair, but they should not be content. A thorough examination into the nature of their sacramental ideas and beliefs, leading perhaps to a better grasp of the true function of the Sacrament, may well be a turning-point in spiritual life. He gives us grace for grace, and meets every upward human aspiration with the divine endowment from above. The sublime experience of union with Christ Himself is the quest upon which faith is ever engaged. That union is a life rather than an act, but the act of faith, as it makes a whole-hearted use of sacramental means, builds up and strengthens that life by bringing it back to its Source.

FELLOWSHIP AND ADORATION

Evangelicals in the past have frequently failed to allow the Sacrament its proper place in their life of practised religion. No doubt they have been led by reaction from what appeared to be an unethical sacramentalism into a somewhat weak and bare observance of the Lord's Supper. But surely it is for those whose final authority is the Mind of Christ, mediated by the Spirit through the records of the Lord's life and teaching, to achieve a full and rich Sacramental doctrine and practice which shall at all points be true to the unchangeable truth as it is in Jesus, and in agreement with really primitive Fellowship usage. The weaker aspects of Protestant individualism must not be allowed to enter the sphere of eucharistic Fellowship. We cannot follow Dr. Otto when he declares that

the Communion "is to be kept entirely apart from the regular and congregational Divine Service, and should be reserved for particular feasts, for celebration at evening or in the night stillness. It ought to be withdrawn altogether from the use and wont of every day and become the most intimate privilege which Christian worship has to offer."¹ At whatever hour the Communion is celebrated it must needs be the chief Service of the day for those who have an adequate understanding of its nature. We desire it to become for all "the regular and congregational Divine Service." In no other way shall we recapture anything approaching the original spirit of fellowship. The Church can never rest content until she has won into the sacramental fellowship all those who now remain outside it. Individual timidity lest a too-frequent rule of Communion should minimise the spiritual effects of the act usually vanishes when put to the test. Such doubts and fears must give way to the needs of the whole Society, and must be guided by the practice of the first Christians, who, realising the "natural" character of that which is most really spiritual, apparently made every evening meal a Holy Communion. Those who resolve to communicate at least on every Sunday can preserve the freshness of the experience, and develop the plan and order of devotional life, by making each Service the subject of a special intention. Defects in character or life which self-examination has revealed can be disclosed in the Presence of the Lord, and be made the ground of meditation and prayer. And from the nature of the case the Holy Communion is pre-eminently the occasion when intercessions, in ordered scheme, on behalf of the world-wide causes of the faith, can most fittingly be offered.

¹ *Loc. cit.*

There remains the highest ground of all. We make our pilgrimage through the many aspects of the Holy Communion right up to the hill of God where our souls are held in sheer adoration of the Father. Every Celebration must finally be tested by the extent to which it fulfils itself as a corporate act of Adoration. It is just this indispensable atmosphere and experience which is so often felt to be lacking; the Service falls short of it far too frequently. But pure and spiritual adoration of God is the goal of all worship; without it our Services may easily deteriorate into thoughtless and meaningless acts; into selfish exercise of mere good habit or long-established custom. The Church must ever seek to achieve the purest, most immaterial act of adoration of her God by the means of the Service of this Holy Sacrament.

THE BACKGROUND OF WORSHIP

It is a matter of fact that many young people to-day, accustomed to the cold, unlovely, "Low-church" setting of the Communion Service, feel the need of more beauty and symbolism in all which concerns the highest act of corporate worship. Evangelicalism is already losing, and deserves to lose, numbers of those who are by upbringing or intellectual conviction its children, because it still fails to give recognition to the fact that the sacramental principle runs through the whole of Nature, and bears constant witness to the Beauty as well as to the Truth and Goodness of God. The setting of the Eucharist should be that of simple but purposeful beauty. It is in this area that development must of necessity occur. The differences between the appointments of a Jewish house-church and those of an English sanctuary will be as marked as is the contrast in the circumstances and

enactment of the Service itself. There is something about the perfectly appointed East End of a church in which the English Use is followed in its dignity and simplicity, which answers to the devotional requirements of the instructed English Churchman, and does much to promote the atmosphere of reverence. Liberal Evangelicalism, recognising this, can render a real service to the Church of England at the present time in supporting those who are striving to restore a Ceremonial and Use which will be true to her distinctive doctrines, and free from innovation suggestive of teaching which is not hers. Simplicity will always be a guiding principle in our form of worship, but simplicity is not synonymous with slovenliness, nor with the unbeautiful. The aim of our Ceremonial and Symbolism, as indeed of the entire background of the Eucharist, will be to aid the worshipper to carry out more really the purpose of the Supper instituted in the Upper Room. While the time for the Central Service may be varied to suit the need of local circumstances, there is no reason why it should not quite frequently take the form of a Choral Eucharist, so long as it maintains at the same time the essential character of a corporate Communion for clergy, choir and people. For music at the Eucharist there is the earliest and highest authority;¹ but our music must be of the best, it must be the best of which we are capable, and it must be congregational as well as choral.

We have referred to the disunited state of Christendom as bearing witness, all too clearly, to the failure of Christian people to use aright the Sacrament of Fellowship. The Sacrament, by the grace of God, can become the means and symbol of a new unifying of the Body of Christ if the followers of Jesus are prepared, at all costs,

¹ Mark xiv. 26.

to follow Him. This Holy Sacrament is only for those who love; it is as we kneel at the Table of the Lord that we realise the unity of the Spirit which exists between all those who love Him. By human traditions, which claim in vain Divine authority or sanction, the Churches have largely succeeded in damming up the great flow of the Spirit of Life. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Christians must claim that liberty and recover it, by throwing themselves back upon the fundamental principles which the Spirit made known in the first days.

G. H. HARRIS.

Special aspects of the Holy Communion touched upon in this Essay may conveniently be studied further in the following *Anglican Evangelical Group Movement* pamphlets:—

- No. 15. The Church and the New Testament.
- „ 23. Christian Worship.
- „ 24. Ritual and Ceremonial.
- „ 29. The Sacramental Presence.
- „ 30. The Eucharistic Sacrifice.
- „ 31. Reservation.
- „ 53. Holy Communion: The Heart of the Sacrament.

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